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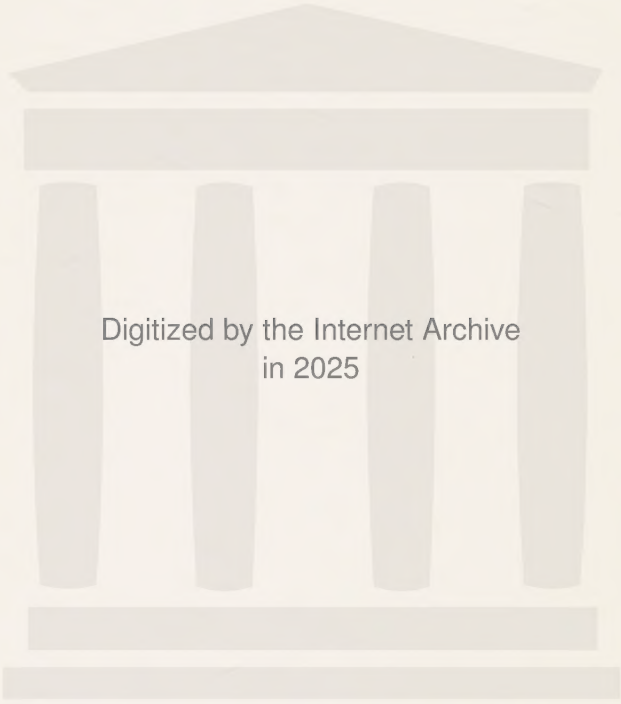
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# PROTESTANT MODERNISM

OR

RELIGIOUS THINKING FOR THINKING MEN

BY

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To

THE MEMORY OF

MY FATHER

JASON EPHRAIM TORREY

WHO TAUGHT ME TO THINK FREELY

THIS BOOK IS

AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

# PREFACE

WAYS of thinking have a history. The paternal grandparents of the author of this book were tried for heresy, for not believing in foreordination to eternal torments, and were expelled from the Baptist church in Williamstown, Massachusetts, known as "the stone church." As a result the author's father was estranged from all churches, but was accustomed to discussions of theology as his daily intellectual exercise. The discussions led to wide reading and much thinking, to a devout spirit and an untrammelled mind. The author's mother early led him to the Methodist church, and he was reared in its theological atmosphere. When he decided to prepare for the ministry, his father, then suffering from mortal disease, placed upon him one injunc-

tion, that he should never teach anything which he had not investigated for himself, and which he was not convinced was reasonable. The injunction was accompanied with the statement by his father, that his own lifetime of study and thinking had led him to the conclusion that a large part of the doctrine of the Christian church had no authority in scripture, and was not true in fact; and with the earnest hope that his son would never fall into the way of teaching anything simply because the church believed it, or because any men believed it.

The author selected Harvard University as the place for his preparation for the ministry, because he expected to find there the largest freedom in religious thinking and expression. Holding faithfully to his allegiance to the evangelical church, he opened his mind fully to hear and faithfully to consider to the extent of his ability all so-called progressive and liberal ideas presented in the university and out of it. The procedure resulted in the shaking of his early religious convictions, and in

a strain of mind often incident to the process. Another outcome of the years of strenuous study was the exhaustion of nerve force, and the clouds of despondency closed about him. When light again broke in, the whole structure of faith had disappeared so completely that his recognition of himself was as an atom floating in space. Soon he found other atoms like himself demanding recognition, and gradually the whole world of created things came back as realities to be accounted for. Such an accounting compelled a return of religious faith. As the train of former beliefs came back, each under critical examination as to its reasonableness, many of them were rejected altogether, and others were made to stand aside and await their proving before they were given a place. The ideas reasonably admitted formed a working constitution for living, established peace and joy, and were put back with a reasonableness which carried conviction that they were to stay as long as reason should sit on the throne.

The author gladly found that his simplified

tenets of faith were in general accord with the faith of the evangelical church. His experience at the university led him to the decision that his life should be given to positive and constructive teaching. He is glad to have found splendid liberty and unlimited opportunity among the Christians who exalt Jesus the Christ as the incomparable revelation of the character and purpose of God.

If the theories and the convictions of this book prove of profit to any, it will be because they have been shaped on the anvil of experience. The author has resisted the temptation to cite other authors, either for favourable or adverse criticism.

The book is published with the hope that it may help men unaccustomed to speculative thinking, to some clear ideas of the fundamental things of religion. It is therefore written in the language of the daily papers, rather than in the language of the schools. The author has even hoped that the book might reach the minds of some of the multitude of the unchurched, and lead them to religious

thinking and to religious action. A reading of the book may possibly help some professional religious teachers to know better what they already know.

DAVID C. TORREY.

The Parsonage,
Bedford, Mass.,
June 16, 1910.

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# Protestant Modernism

## I

## INTRODUCTION

### PRIMITIVE RELIGIOUS IDEAS

THE introductory statement of the Hebrew scriptures is that, "In the beginning God Created the heaven and the earth." At just what period in the world's history this conviction became established in the thinking of any considerable group of men is uncertain, but we may consider it as marking a stage in the development of religious ideas. Though it occurred many centuries ago, yet in comparison with the ages preceding it in which primitive men groped after knowledge, it is a modern conviction, and a tremendous advance upon the ideas which had been held.

We have no written record of the confused ideas of men, slowly verging to conviction and expression, in the ages which intervened between the first dawning of self-consciousness and this formulated conviction that one personal God is the author of all things. The word here translated God is in the Hebrew in the plural form, and since men conceived of many gods long before they conceived of one God, they probably long thought the world was the work of many gods before they came to think of it as the work of one. Undoubtedly primitive men were very many thousands of years reaching even the former conviction, and we can judge of the process by which they reached it by the study of the religious ideas of those races of men who in various parts of the world have been belated, and are still primitive in mind. An examination of the primitive conceptions of our own minds, which primitive conceptions are not wholly erased by instruction in the inherited religious conceptions of our day, will also help us. In the study of the development of these primitive

religious ideas, we may note that we are dealing exclusively with processes of the human mind. We can judge of the influences upon the mind from without only by their fruits in the conceptions and convictions of the mind itself. This is simply saying that if revelation exists we can be aware of the fact and of the results only by the ideas and convictions which we find in men's minds. Facts can be revealed only to the mind; and only by the contents of the mind can we know whether anything has been revealed or not.

To affirm that religion is wholly a mental operation does not mean that it is a matter of pure reasoning, for the mental processes include also the imagination, the emotions and the will. In order to follow effectively the reasoning of this book it is necessary to understand that mind, as here used, is comprehensive of the intuitive faculties and of the emotions commonly ascribed to the heart. It is legitimate and necessary to include all these, for we know things without knowing how we know

them, and we pity and sympathise and love only as we know. It is, however, only through the mind that information comes, and emotion is a mental operation. We therefore exclude all sensuous feelings from religion, for though they may be generated by religious thinking, they are to be treated as physical facts. Religion is not only confined to the mind, but from the very nature of mind it is a necessary result of mental activity. A necessary outcome of serious thinking on the meaning of life is a religion of some sort. All races of men are religious, though some individuals even in civilised communities are so intellectually inert, or their minds are so occupied with trivialities, that no religion is discernible. Among all races, however, there are some active minds, and these produce for every race a religion. This is because the very conditions of mental activity necessitate religious conceptions.

The human mind is unable to solve satisfactorily the problem of its own existence, and the meaning of the things of which it is cogni-

sant. The mind asks where it itself came from, where it is going, and what it is here for. It is not able to answer satisfactorily any of these questions. The mind is not only a mystery to itself, but it is also in mysterious relations with things exterior to itself. It is hemmed in by mystery. Its sole activity consciously and unconsciously is expended in attempts to solve that mystery. The mind craves knowledge of all things. It is also aware that there are things to be known which it cannot know, and it is out of this insufficiency for its tasks that its religious theories arise.

It is because all minds have limitations that all minds are religious. It is probable that in a final analysis each man has a peculiar and individual religion of his own, no two men holding exactly the same conceptions, or enjoying the same experiences. But while minds vary in details of thinking, their general contents are alike, and the interchange of ideas through the use of language serves to conform mind to mind, and to produce groups of men

who hold similar religious conceptions. Thus religious systems arise.

In religion, imagination plays an important and legitimate part. Though often treated contemptuously, imagination is as worthy a factor of the mind as are the reasoning powers, the affections or the will. To attain a religion each person must of necessity form his own conception of superhuman beings, and of his relations to them, for no man has seen these beings at any time. Consequently, a religious faith of any sort is a faith in superhuman beings which are given form and attributes by imagination. As the discussion proceeds we shall have to judge how far this fact affects the value of religious ideas.

The mind finds that with each attainment of knowledge there is opened up a new and larger field of mystery. In figure the mind joyfully climbs one mount of difficulty, only from its summit to discover many more heights of which it had no conception, half discernible in the cloudland of mystery. From this region which lies beyond its capacity for ex-

ploration, it sees specific powers manifesting themselves. We may mention the storm, the drouth, the pestilence, as examples, because the mind notes first the sensational and the baleful; but the mysterious powers are innumerable. Baffled and harassed by these mysterious powers, the mind acknowledges them, and in fear and dread it makes its acknowledgment supplicatingly. Because religion begins in fear, its most primitive form of expression is placating demons, and the element of fear is scarcely eliminated in the highest forms of religious expression. This supplicating acknowledgment of powers beyond man's understanding and control is the beginning of all religion. Religion, then, is man's acknowledgment that he lives in conditions beyond his understanding and beyond his control, and an attempt to establish harmonious relations with these conditions. As the manifestations of power in the mysterious are many and varied, the primitive minds have always conceived of the powers as many.

The next step in religious development is

that by which the mind of man endowed the powers of mystery with personality, and came to consider them as having intelligent purpose, and love, and hate, and choice. The primitive man was early conscious that he himself and his enemies and friends had powers which they could direct at will and with intelligent purpose, as they were moved by love or hate. They and their enemies could even project these powers into space by hurling the stone, or club, or javelin. And they could harness natural forces to accomplish their purposes by setting a trap for their enemies or for their prey. It was most natural that they should believe that the manifestations in nature which they beheld innumerable on every hand were the projected powers of hidden beings having attributes like their own. So in their conception of the unseen powers they endowed them with the attributes of mind, and often with the impulses of the body, which they themselves possessed. So the unseen powers became personal, to their conception, and men believed in gods.

Since these gods who peopled the environment of mystery were purely conceptions of the mind, their powers could not be estimated, and there was no reason why the mind should limit them in any respect. To them as causes were naturally ascribed all phenomena, so naturally came the assertion that they were the creators of the heaven and the earth.

Again it was many steps from this mental conception of creative gods to the idea and conviction that there is only one God. The Hebrew nation was the pioneer in this progress, though individuals in other nations reached the same conclusions independently. In Hebrew literature we have suggestions that these steps were taken logically. As men grew in social dependence, the family becoming more cohesive until the larger family became the clan, and clans the tribe, and tribes the nation, each man found that his own good was merged in the good of the whole. His solicitude ceased to be so much for himself individually as for his nation. He came to think of the powers unseen as interested in

nations rather than in individuals, and as the conflicts in life became ever more between nations than between individuals, there naturally arose the conception of the gods as interested in, and championing the cause of, particular nations, until each nation came to adhere to its own particular god and to pay its vows and offerings to him and to look to him for favour.

Among the Hebrew people, with the growing conception that their nation was the chosen nation which was to overcome all others and possess the earth, there went as a correlative the conception that their God who designed them for this elevation, and in whom they trusted to bring it to pass, must be a God above all gods. Thus in their thinking the Hebrew people gradually exalted their God and correspondingly belittled the gods of other nations, until they thought of their own God as omnipotent, while the gods of the other nations were idols. From consideration of their own moral consciousness men were led to the lofty conceptions, first limited to lead-

ing minds, like those producing the Psalms and prophecies, that God is just and merciful. There still remained as a climax to the whole process the conviction, reached fully through the historic Jesus, that God is love.

Such treatment of the development of religious ideas raises the question of their reality. Is not the whole process a matter of progressive imagination? Is not its result in religious faith a purely mental creation, a fiction, pleasing in its outcome, but deceptive? All the preliminary steps, by which the conceptions have gained credence, have been outgrown and discarded as incomplete if not untrue. Is not this fact presumptive evidence that the whole process is fictitious, and its results worthy of no credence? It is these questions which the succeeding chapters of this book will attempt to answer.

Minds trained to approach theology from the side of spectacular or mechanical revelation may at first thought assume that revelation has been denied. Such minds may come to see, however, that this process of develop-

ment of religious ideas is simply the record in the human mind of the continuous efforts of God to make himself known. In this process he reveals first his power, then his personality, his unity, his ascendancy, his righteousness, his mercy, and finally his love.

The underlying issue between the progressive and conservative thinkers on religious subjects is whether God makes himself known only through the processes of the mind, or whether he reveals himself in spectacular ways, in signs and wonders. This is the issue between the group of men called Modernists who are being disciplined in the Roman Catholic Church, and the Pope and the hierarchy who are intent upon that discipline. The Modernists contend that God is vitally immanent, that is, indwelling, in his world, and is revealing himself ever to all men through their natural mental processes; while the Roman Catholic Church holds to the transcendence of God, and teaches that God has revealed himself through means transcending reason, in miracles, in dramatic appearances,

in special confidences to chosen men, in mechanical inspiration; and it rests religious authority in the hierarchy of the Church, a divinely constituted custodian and interpreter of these supernatural revelations. As men's minds work much the same whether the men adhere to the Protestant wing or the Roman Catholic wing of the church, this same issue, whether God reveals himself to the mind only through natural reasonable processes, or whether he reveals himself spectacularly and by mechanical inspiration, is the issue between the progressive and the conservative men in the constant intellectual unrest of the Protestant world. To aid in clarifying men's thinking, a brief treatise on Protestant Modernism seems to be in place. The argument of this book is that religion is confined to mental processes and that in the contents of men's minds are the only sanctions for religious faith. The book seeks to raise for each man the question whether the sanctions found there are adequate and compelling.

## II

### THE REASONABLE BELIEF IN GOD

TO the young of every generation the religious problems of the ages are new. In the growth of the religious ideas in each individual there may be a shadow of the historic development as outlined in the preceding chapter. In all Christian communities this is interrupted and superseded by religious instruction. Each generation is blessed by the intellectual religious inheritance from its predecessors; but since religious ideas and conceptions are incomplete, the blessing is not perfect, and since no scheme of religious thinking is entirely free from error, the blessing of imparted truth is intermingled with the curse of imparted falsehood. As it is true that the majority of minds are incapable of much speculative inquiry, such majority of minds

are able to accept the creeds which are taught them. Each man accepts the particular creed which by happening is that of his parents, and is able with some measure of peace and assurance to build thereon his religious life structure. That all ought to do this is the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church, and the idea holds also a large place in the teaching of the Protestant churches. Indeed all Protestant teaching is full of the striking paradox of exaltation on one hand of individual liberty of thought, and of appeal on the other hand to accept the authority of creeds.

With the advance of knowledge, and the general dissemination of ideas among all classes of men by printing, there is an increasing proportion of minds which rise to the plane of speculative inquiry. These minds employ themselves in critical examination of the foundations on which religious ideas and convictions rest; and, alas! find that many ideas and convictions are planted in the shifting sand, while even the most stable have

under them elements uncertain, if not insecure. It is for these latter minds that we propose to mark the natural path by which they may assure themselves of the reasonableness of belief in God. We feel certain that this is the best path because it starts with the finite existence we are sure of, and travels by the generally accepted law of all intellectual action, toward that infinite which is beyond complete intellectual conception. The starting point with each is his own individual existence; the law of the mind is the law of cause and effect.

A word of emphasis concerning the laws of thought may not be amiss. The mind defines things by comparing them with other things; and it claims to understand things when it comprehends in some measure what causes them, and what they, taken as causes, will effect. By far the larger part of the activity of the mind is in tracing causes and effects. From the time when a baby in the cradle reaches his hands into the air to grasp his toes, until the mind subsides in death, each mind spends its

conscious moments in a ceaseless round of asking the same two questions: What causes this? What will this effect? There are such infinite blendings of causes and effects, and such intricate relations, and the realm of facts the mind deals with is so relatively large, that there is never monotony. The mind is so completely subject to this law that it cannot conceive of anything as existing without a cause. At the same time it is aware of surrounding conditions, the causes of which are shrouded in mystery. By the law of its own action the mind has to accept the fact of unknown causes, if not of unknowable causes. With its acknowledged limitation its accepts the unknowable.

As stated above, that of which a man is sure above all else is his own existence. A man cannot doubt his own existence and be sane. Again, logically, it is impossible for a man to believe in his own existence and to deny existence to his fellows. We are constrained to believe our fellows have an existence like our own. Although a man knows

that he differs much from his dog, if he attempts to acknowledge that he has a real existence and to deny that his dog has the same, he faces a task impossible because absurd. So men believe in the lower orders of life. Men are also as sure their bodies have a real existence as they are that their minds have. Even if we grant the possibility that these bodies are subjective to the mind, merely thought forms, even then, as thought forms, they are existent things, to be accounted for by causes.

Our bodies then are existences. All animal bodies are existences. The mind cannot accept this fact and proceed to deny that the ground we walk on is existent. The world is undeniable: the land, the sea, the clouds, the stars, the heaven and the heaven of heavens, the universe and all in it, has existence, mysterious as it all may be. If it has not existence independent of our processes of thinking, it has existence in them. The law by which we reason also dictates to us the necessity of believing that all these things have antecedent cause or causes. So without for the time say-

ing anything about these causes except simply this, that they are causes of things, we may affirm that all men who have the intelligence to grasp facts, and who reason by the common law of cause and effect, since they know not all causes, believe in unknown powers. The conviction that all things which exist must have causes necessitates such belief. Men once by common consent called the powers gods.

Now the more progressive minds trace back all causes to one cause, since they are convinced of harmony and unity in all creation. There seems to be no actual proof that there is one power or one God rather than two or more; and no line of reasoning which leads to this conviction. The minds of men cannot help, however, according large significance to the fact of unity in the properties and laws which govern the material universe. So far as the created world informs the mind, if there are two gods or more they act in unity, either because one is superior and in authority, or because existing in equality they act in perfect

agreement. Simply then because it accords with our conviction of unity in the manifest world, we may if we please fall in with the custom of the times and assume that there is one God and only one. There seems, however, no process of reasoning which constrains us to believe in one God rather than in two or more.

Every candid thinker must realise that there is a large element of indefiniteness and speculation in this process, which certainly is not a satisfactory one. It is simply the best we have. And it is only fair to face its most serious flaw. We have reasoned of the being of God by the law of cause and effect. By the nature of the mental process we cannot think of anything as existing without a cause. Existence without cause is to our minds unthinkable. So this very law which leads us to a reasonable belief in God carries us on beyond him. It is incompatible with reason to think of God as having being without cause to produce him. We may in the creeds use the words, "without cause," but it is impos-

sible for us to conceive such fact. Logically this invalidates our whole process of reasoning about God, and leaves our belief in him hung up in the air. It is simply the limitation of our intellectual processes in this direction. There are limitations in every direction. But on this account we cannot stop thinking, or wisely refuse to use the results of our thinking, so far as the conclusions we reach are more reasonable to believe than to doubt. For practical purposes we may assume that God is and that he is the absolute, in the sense that he is a halting place beyond which it is useless for the reason to try to go.

The mind unsatisfied with these results sweeps the field of possibilities to see if this is the best proof of God which can be attained. It turns to authority,—the authority of so-called revelation. If we carefully examine the basis of such authority we shall be convinced, I think, that it has arisen and has become established almost entirely by this same process of reasoning from the things created to the Creator. We shall conclude that God

never at any time has revealed himself more clearly to men than he does to-day; and by no other means so satisfactorily as by the intelligent and reasoning processes of the mind.

In all ages particular individuals have been fitted by moral quality and spiritual discernment to receive illuminating conceptions of the unknown, and these conceptions have found expression and record for the enlightenment of others. Visions and dreams have formed a part of these illuminating conceptions. But these visions and dreams are very largely given form by the instruction which the mind has previously received; and no part of the visions and dreams can pass into the body of convictions approved by authority until it has met the test of reason. In fact nearly all conceptions of visions and dreams are ruled out by reason. This is necessarily so because of their fantastic nature and because of their endless contradictions. Religious visions and dreams add about as much to religious convictions as ordinary dreams add to the sum total of the working knowledge of the world.

So far as the being of God is concerned, the Roman Catholic Church, and the Protestant denominations, all trace their convictions to the "Thus saith the Lord," of the Hebrew scriptures. The peculiarity of the ancient Hebrew people was their acute sensitiveness to the presence of God, and their sublime religious conceptions growing out of this. If God is a self-revealing God, the Hebrews were certainly a chosen people. All nations of the earth are blessed through them, for no other nation has possessed a comparable religious faculty. Yet the thorough-going examination of the times and conditions when the expressions of the Hebrew scriptures originated, show them reasonably to have been the conceptions of men, spiritually-minded and able, who traversed like processes of thought to that which has been outlined in this chapter, and who daringly clothed their conceptions in picturesque forms of speech.

The claim is sometimes made that there is adequate authority for belief in God in the inner witness of the spirit in man,—that all

men are aware of God intuitively. The history of religions, and the confused and inadequate ideas of God now existing, especially among Pagan peoples, is complete refutation of such claim. The inner consciousness of a man, primitive or modern, does not originate adequate conceptions of God. The better conceptions now current are the cumulative result of many generations of religious thinking. When by instruction the nobler ideas of God are brought to the bar of the inner consciousness there is a sense of satisfaction which is valuable approval, and often even a satisfying inward witness. It may be said that the inner consciousness does not conceive God, but is capable of approving of him in measure as he is brought to its attention. It will be shown in a later chapter how all religious conceptions have to be built up anew in each generation.

Men would like to begin their reasoning concerning the world and themselves from the standpoint of a knowledge of God and his purposes; but the trouble is that they have no adequate conception of God to start from,

until they form that conception through a study of themselves. At a certain point in their knowledge of themselves they may take that which is spoken of as the "leap of faith," and then begin to view themselves and the world from the standpoint of God.

Such review of the grounds for believing in God shows us that we have no infallible test for religious truth, and that the best we have is our intellectual processes, including our reason. We should acknowledge the value of consensus of agreement as the only basis for any measure of authority. The work of many minds corrects and complements the common product of all; but this is a case where the sum total of things inadequate can never reach the adequate. With present mental attainments authority can never be other than a relative term.

Just as the basis of our belief in God's being is our consciousness of existent things, and the recognised necessity that we and they shall have a cause, so we best reason from ourselves and the other things we are sure of, to the

attributes of God. Since it is because of created things we believe in a Creator, and we postulate him to account for the things we are cognisant of, a reversal of the process ascribes to him perfection of power. We postulate him to account for all things, and conversely attribute to him power over all. If we think he is, we consistently think him omnipotent. From our limited intelligence we also reason to his perfect knowledge.

A wonderful thing the mind is. It thinks; and more strange to us than the fact of thinking, is the fact that we sit back mentally and watch ourselves think; we even will what we shall think about and make ourselves think about what we please. It is possible for us to conceive that this wonderful thing, the mind, may have sprung from causes lower than itself; but when we place this supposition side by side with the alternative, that the cause of our being is intelligent, and knew what he was doing when he endowed us with intelligence, and did this with definite purpose, few of us will hesitate to choose the latter as more prob-

able. Grant the possibility that this wonderful faculty of thinking could be spontaneously generated from insensible matter; put over against this the claim that the cause of our being is intelligent and purposeful, and that he made us in such measure like himself that we are sharers of his intellectual activity, and the vast majority of men will believe the latter. They will believe it simply because it seems to them more reasonable. It is not easy, moreover, for men to believe that any blind power, itself lacking intelligence, accidentally set the forces in motion which have produced the wonders of creation, which the intellectual powers of men are able in a measure to comprehend. It is not easy for men to believe that they themselves are greater in any way than the cause of their being, and yet they are aware of possessing intelligent power to conceive and execute tasks both gigantic and delicate, like throwing a spider-web of iron across a great stream, or harnessing nature's forces to perform mechanically most intricate labours. Men's knowledge of their own minds makes it

far more reasonable for them to believe than to doubt that God is intelligent, and that he has made men intelligent like himself. It is, therefore, far more reasonable to believe than to doubt that God knows things, and that what he does is with purpose.

It is a fact that mankind in the aggregate knows more than any one man knows. If God is the cause of intelligence it is reasonable to think that he knows all that all know. In fact, if he is the creator of all things, it is reasonable to believe that he has intelligent purpose in all his work, and that he knows all about everything. It is more reasonable to believe than to doubt that God is perfect in knowledge.

Such belief in God puts meaning and order and purpose into the universe, gives reality to our mental processes, leaves no place for fatalism, and restricts the accidental to narrow limits. It adds to our personal dignity to believe ourselves endowed even in measure with the intelligence of the Creator. It is a comfort to think that our lives even to the smaller

experiences are known to God, and that we each are a part of a purpose older than the foundation of the world. From such belief we naturally go on yearning for better things; to ask if God has any really kindly purpose in the creation of the world and men. Is God good?

## III

### IS GOD GOOD?

THE belief that God made the world, and that he knows what he is doing with it, helps much to bring order out of chaos in men's thinking. But the more significant question is whether God has made men with any kindly intent that their being may be worth while to themselves. Does God act invariably for benevolent ends? Is God good?

The natural line of reasoning to answer this question is the same as that followed concerning the intelligence of God. We look in upon ourselves.

"The proper study of mankind is man."

We recognise that there is something about this intellectual endowment that God has given us, this participation in the intelligence

of God, which is to be rated as even nobler than the ability to grasp facts and to understand in some measure their relations. It is the kindly feeling toward other sentient beings that we call affection or love. Grand as it is to know something about men and animals and things, more grand is it to have that knowledge permeated with emotion; the warmth of sympathy and kindness being added to the light of knowledge.

This nobler phase of the mental activity which we call feeling makes us social beings. It brings us into a new plane of broader and happier living. The simple knowing of things moves us through curiosity to some self-directed action and expression, but this is not to be compared in power or satisfaction to the activity that our affections call forth in their endeavour to express themselves. Kindly feeling seems to us, therefore, far grander and nobler than cold intelligence. We naturally raise the question whether this, which is the noblest and best in us, is wanting in him who is our cause? How can we account for love

in ourselves if it is not an attribute of God who created us? The majority of men who ask the question will conclude that it is more reasonable to believe than to doubt that God is a God of love, that he is benevolent in his feeling toward us and in his purposes. It is not easy for us to deny to him that which is best in us. On the same grounds, also, that we believe him perfect in knowledge, of which he permits men to share a part, because the mind craves perfection, we believe him to be the absolute in love, the perfection of that noblest attribute of human personality which men possess in measure.

Now the mind, in addition to the knowing of things and reasoning about them, and the knowing of other sentient beings and having an affection for them, has a comprehension of a better and a worse, a right and a wrong, a good and an evil. This principle enters concretely into about every expression of the self. The mind has a moral consciousness, a power of moral discrimination. Where does this idea of good and evil come from? It must

either be a part of the mental endowment from God, or men must have gained it by experience. But if it has arisen from experience it has been gained under conditions and subject to laws established by the Creator. The fact that men have moral sense makes it more reasonable to believe than to doubt that God has it, and that he gave it to men. The sense of the ought and the ought not we reasonably believe to be a divinely-planted intuition, but the knowledge of what in particular circumstances is right and what is wrong is gained by experience. Reasoning from himself man is constrained to believe that God is a moral being. And on the same grounds that we believe him perfect in power and perfect in knowledge, we believe him perfect in goodness.

This is the most satisfactory way of accounting for man's intellectual processes,—that God has imparted to him a share of his own powers of intelligence and love and right choice, and along with these a conception that there is a perfect of which these things in

men are fragments. Thus men may, from their understanding of themselves be led to a reasonable belief in the perfect power, the perfect knowledge, and the perfect goodness of God. God is thus self-revealing. This impartation of his own intelligence by lawful methods is revelation, and since this impartation is ever occurring, revelation is progressive.

As in the previous chapter it was shown that men postulate God, and that the best proof of his reality is that men are able to do this; so the best assurance of God's goodness is that men are able to think him good, and, as we shall see later, are constrained to think him good.

In this reasoning concerning God and his attributes I have used the expressions, "reasonable belief," "more reasonable to believe than to doubt." There is very little that the mind can be absolutely sure of, very little that it deals with in which there is not an element of doubt. The mind knows absolutely only a few unimportant things like the fact that two

and two make four. But for useful purposes we say that we know things when the preponderance of evidence makes it more reasonable for us to believe them than to doubt them. Especially in the matter of religious beliefs is this so; and the faith we have in the being and character of God, rests on the fact that it is more reasonable for us to believe in his being and his attributes than to doubt him and them. In religion there is always a place left for faith; as faith is acting as though things were, for which we cannot have positive assurance, but only reasonable probability.

Here follows the difficult matter of making this conviction of the reason, that God is perfect in love and goodness, tally with the experience of men and animals living in the conditions which he establishes, and in the moral order for which he is responsible. A belief in God's goodness is essentially more difficult than a belief in his perfect power and perfect knowledge. The mind has a vast array of facts to hinder its belief in the goodness of God, while it has no array of opposing

facts to hinder belief in his power and knowledge.

There is evil in the world. The worst phase of it is immoral conduct, then follows sickness and premature death. Involved in these are mental pain and physical pain. Since we agree it to be reasonable to believe in God as the cause of all things, he is responsible for this evil. There can be no clear thinking concerning this problem of evil until we recognise that whatever it is, in all its forms, it is of God, a part of his ordering of the universe, to serve his purpose. Any other theory of evil is evasive. Immoral conduct is of course limited to beings having moral consciousness: to men, so far as this world is concerned. Immoral conduct may be defined as seeking the pleasures of the flesh instead of the joy of the spirit; as seeking our own individual satisfaction at the expense of the wellbeing of others. Wilful wrong doing is the great curse of the world. Its result is pain. Its worst result is mental pain, remorse. Wilful wrong doing, and wrong doing through igno-

rance, is the cause of physical pain and of premature death.

There is a tremendous amount of wrong doing in the world. Human nature is persistently selfish, greedy, lustful, cruel. Human society is therefore permeated by injustice, and inhuman viciousness. The social order seems in some aspects more like the fighting of wild animals in the arena, tearing and destroying, aggressively or in self-defence, than like an orderly company of reasoning beings related to a just God, living together in the peace and mutual helpfulness of love. Indeed the two major motives in this iniquity of men seem to be survivals of the two primal motives in all animal life, the procuring of food and procreation. The major part of men's wrong doing can be traced back to some form of greed or lust.

When we examine individuals, we find these evils not wholly subjected to the nobler powers in the best of men; and in the average man the balancing of the better and the worse is so even that the inner life is a continuous conflict,

in which for the man himself there is scarcely positive assurance that the good will triumph. The eye everywhere beholds the blight of sin, the ear becomes dulled to the incessant cry of woe which sin causes. The mental pain of remorse and condemnation cannot be measured, but added to the physical pain, it is not strange that men, many and often, believe that the pain of the world outweighs the pleasure of the world, so that the sum of human experiences should be interpreted in terms of suffering instead of in terms of joy. Often also the pain of wrong doing, mental and physical, is borne by the innocent, by loving parents, by faithful wife, by degenerated offspring, in greater measure than by the wilful transgressor. We ask reverently, How can God answer for this?

We may define wrong doing as the deliberate refusal of the individual to act in accordance with the best he knows, to conform his life to the measure of reasonableness and affection which God has imparted to his mind. The mental and physical pain which is the

result of this disobedience would seem to be useless unless it is sent for redemptive purposes, to arrest the sufferer's attention, and to drive him back to obedience. The vicarious suffering of one for the sin of another is sometimes also the most effective of all things to bring the disobedient to a sense of the dreadfulness of his wrong doing.

But these reasons seem far inadequate to justify the tremendous conflict between good and evil which is raging in the human race. The immensity of the conflict, and the terrific nature of it, would seem to demand that something of great value should come out of it. It must be a magnificent wager which is worth the game. It seems possible that God could have made man free from evil, and saved him from this conflict. It would seem possible that God could have made men good just as clothes pins are good when they come from the factory, but in that case men would have been good in the same sense that clothes pins are good, that is, they would have had no moral quality.

It is reasonable, therefore, that it is not simple goodness, a goodness which does not do wrong because it cannot, or because it has no evil inclination, that God is seeking, but rather that it is the goodness of virtue which he desires,—that virtue which resists the wrong to which it is attracted with tremendous force, that virtue which is to come out of the long and strenuous campaign, made strong through resistance, and triumphant though frightfully battle scarred.

Then there is much pain caused by ignorance which falls short of disobedience. This is physical pain, and an evil, though not to be compared with the remorse which is a result of disobedience. Physical pain has an educative value. It warns a man that he has broken some one of nature's laws. It is an endless incentive to a man to know his environment and to know the laws of his own nature. It is one of the means by which God opens a man's mind that he may impart knowledge. But these purposes can never be a satisfactory answer to the questions caused by the dread-

ful and protracted sufferings of those afflicted with especially painful and loathsome diseases. To these questions the wisdom of man has no adequate answer.

Following pain, mental and physical, premature death is an evil. I use the word "premature" with death, because it is by no means clear that physical death, in a sinless world, would exist in any other sense than the painless and happy parting of the divine nature of man from his material body. But the physical death of human beings is hastened by both deliberate and ignorant transgressions of God's law. It is this prematureness of death that makes it a serious source of pain. People mourn their dead because they are taken before their proper time, before the work of life is completed. Premature death is caused often by ignorance for which no blame can attach; but this makes it no easier to reconcile it with the goodness of God.

There is another cause of pain and death in the world which is more difficult yet to reconcile with the acts of an all-knowing and bene-

ficent God. It is the suffering and loss of life by tornado, shipwreck, earthquake, and famine.

Two vessels collide in the wide waters of the ocean, and hundreds perish by freezing or drowning. A few years ago several millions of people died of starvation in India. Babies died at the dry breast, or searched for milk after the spark of life had flown from the mother's body; children faded to skeletons and crept away to die. I do not see how men in the midst of such calamity, trying to relieve it, survived the horror of it. The famine was caused by the lack of the usual rain. Is the earth God's? Was he asleep, or hunting, when the cries of fear began to arise? It would seem as though a wave of his hand, even a thought of his mind, might have sent the gentle showers down from the Himalayas to bring hope and comfort and joy and life. Did not he know? Did not he care? Was any good end served by the suffering? Undoubtedly it made men in India wiser as to the possibilities of calamity. Possibly it

aroused them to take some precautionary measures for the future. The calamity may be cited as an indictment of British misrule. But do these gains justify the means of instruction? I have nothing to say. No man has anything pertinent to say. Human reason is baffled. The mind here not only accepts limitations; but it finds irreconcilable conflict between the facts in the case so far as it comprehends them, and the reasonable conviction, based upon the mind's innate sense of goodness, that God is good, a God of love.

Not only the nature of the problem of human life, but the magnitude of it, measured by man's comprehension, becomes a burden to the inquiring and sympathetic mind. To the man favoured with the physical comforts and the mental advantages of civilisation, the life of the masses even in civilised lands, and much more the life of the masses in all other lands, seems sordid and narrow and painful, meagre in physical support and unalleviated by free and active intelligence. The heart cries out at the thought of millions of natives in India

living on each a daily allowance of bread not larger than the fingers of a man's hand, and at thought of the hordes in China, in Turkey, in Africa, and in all parts of the earth, in degrees of need and degradation. The very size of the problem adds to its bewilderment and oppressiveness. Could not God have worked out his purpose more kindly on a less multitudinous scale?

It is worth while to give passing attention to God's dealing with the animal world. The lower animals are everywhere in the keenest kind of struggle to preserve each his individual life, and to perpetuate his kind. Most animals are the natural prey, the daily food of other animals. All animals of this kind have to use their keenest alertness to preserve their lives.

It is possible to view this struggle in the animal world as cruel. To do so is however to project into it human self-consciousness. There is little if anything in the conduct of the animals themselves to indicate that they consider life cruel or unhappy. The wood-

pecker and the chickadee are as bright and cheerful and happy in the winter storm as the bobolink is in summer. The birds that are not equipped by nature to be happy in the northern winters, have the leisure and the resources to go South. When a squirrel creeps out of his snug quarters on a frosty morning there is no subdued air of suffering about him. The whisk of his tail and the note of his call are full of cheer and courage and happiness.

The cases are few where men discover animals in their wild and natural state in other conditions than those of contentment and happiness. There is reason to believe that there is practically no sickness among them. If they do not die as prey or by accident their last illness is short and painless. Not having self-consciousness, they have no dread of capture or of death. By instinct they elude their pursuers, and if caught they seldom escape in a maimed condition to suffer or die. Their death is usually quick, and the pain accompanying it of short duration. There is wonderful provision everywhere for animal life,

and all animals are wonderfully adapted to their circumstances. The mink is undoubtedly as warm hunting for trout in the frozen stream, as a man is in a warm workshop toiling for his bread. There is much reason to believe that kindness, not cruelty, is God's law in the animal world; and that pleasure, not pain, is the largely-predominating factor in animal life.

We may sum up the case briefly. Human reason cannot reconcile the facts of wrong doing and pain and death with the absolute goodness of God. Human reason cannot understand the purpose of the insidious power of evil in the world, and the conflict which it wages with the aspirations for goodness in the spiritual nature of man. Human reason is abashed at the seemingly accidental happenings in nature which produce horrible sufferings for vast numbers. Yet, notwithstanding all difficulties, it is far more reasonable to believe than to doubt the absolute goodness of God. This faith rests on these foundations: that man is able to conceive of absolute good-

ness, and to aspire after it in himself; that God is the author of this ability in man to conceive of absolute goodness and to aspire after it; and being the author of the concept of these things in man, he is most reasonably the possessor of them himself. Not to believe this leaves the eternal ought without authority, and reduces morals to chaos.

The fact of evil in the universe and the probability that it has a purpose adequate to justify its existence, indicates that God's goodness is not sentimental, or soft, or weak, but stern and exacting. He would seem not to be easy-going and indulgent and lenient, —such things being perhaps a part of the imperfections of the finite; but on the other hand he would seem to be demanding always the perfect, and punishing summarily every failure. God would seem to take long views and great risks and let men learn by experiences slow and painful, like the superstitious customs of India, Japan and China. As we may conceive the human race as not yet made but in the making, the social order may be as good

as it can be at the present stage; but if so, its making seems a long and dreadful process. When later we consider the reasonable purpose in man's creation, we may be led to see that God's goodness toward men is for exalted and holy ends; which ends may justify the pain ordered for those who fall short, and the severer penalty for those who defy.

Just as it gives dignity and comfort to men to believe that God is, and that he gives men life with intelligent purpose, it gives them something better still to believe that God is benevolent. To dignity and courage is added assurance that the individual struggle for goodness in which we day by day engage is not in vain, and the assurance that good is to triumph over evil in the universe. This assurance of faith begets endurance and good cheer.

# IV

## WHAT SHALL WE THINK OF JESUS?

WHAT shall we think of Jesus? The question has two important aspects: the historic Jesus, what shall we think of him? and the personality of Jesus, does that adequately reveal God, and in any way enable men to share God's life?

Our inquiries concerning the historic Jesus lead us by natural course to inquiry concerning his personality. If we conclude such a person lived, we ask what he did, what he taught, whether he still exists with an interest in the spiritual affairs of humanity, and if so, how that interest is manifested. In searching for the foundations of our reasonable belief in God and in his attributes of power and knowledge and love, we found these beliefs

resting on the fact that we possess these attributes in a measure, and it is more reasonable for us to believe than to doubt that God is our creator, and that he possesses the perfection of that which he has bestowed upon us in part. We shall find that though the evidence which we weigh in deciding what we shall think of Jesus is the records of the Gospels, and the Christian church, yet that we are most weightily induced to our conclusions by our spiritual experiences, by the intuitive answer of our own consciousness as to whether Jesus expresses the truth that we need and for which we aspire, whether he reveals the character of God and enables us to share it.

Men have asked whether Jesus really lived, or whether he is not an imagined ideal personality. The two important facts in evidence concerning his human existence are the New Testament and the Christian church. If Jesus' earthly life is denied these still have to be accounted for. There are no records in evidence of Jesus' life except the four Gospels. Certainly none of these were brought into their

present form until thirty years after the death of Jesus; probably all at a later date than that, and certainly the Gospel of John much later; but the likenesses and the differences of the Gospels indicate that they were based partly at least upon efforts to record Jesus' sayings and doings made very soon after his death. The acts of Jesus and his words held in the memory of the disciples were gradually incorporated into these written records, which were from time to time re-edited. There is a chance that fiction entered into the composition; but on the whole the narratives have a naturalness, a simplicity and a sincerity, and also in the different Gospels a diversified development, which makes it unreasonable to believe that they are other than honest attempts to record for the world's uses the works and the words of an actual and unusual person.

As a buttress to the Gospel stories stands the Christian church. It is in the world, an institution undeniable. Its history is traced back by a multiplicity of evidence to the time of the writing of the Epistles, begun about

twenty-five years after the death of Jesus, and its development at that time was such as to render probable almost to certainty that it was in existence in embryonic form within a few weeks after the recorded ascension of Christ. The minds of men are so dominated by the law of cause and effect that it is very difficult to believe that Christianity, a religion so markedly in advance of any religion which preceded it, or the Christian church, could have come into being without a founder. More on this point is said uselessly. Some few men may doubt Jesus' earthly existence, but such may be permitted to go their way, for the evidence of the historic Jesus is such that the vast majority of men accept the fact beyond reasonable doubt.

The acceptance of Jesus as an historic character immediately exalts him to a place of large importance in the world's progress. The Christian religion has had an influential past, and is the religion of those nations which promise to shape the world's history in the near future at least. In these nations Christ-

ianity furnishes the ideal for the social order; and in some measure at least personal loyalty to Christ is a motive to the realisation of the ideal. What did Jesus teach, and what was the spirit of his life? Does his teaching and does his life ring true to our sense of the true?

The internal evidence of the Gospel of John points to the disciple John as its author. It is not material to our reasoning whether he was or was not. In the first chapter of the Gospel of John we have the most significant approach and introduction to the life of Jesus which has been put on record. The one word "Logos" there used, summed up the fruitage of a strenuous period of intellectual activity in the pagan world covering the three centuries before Christ. That word stood to pagan philosophers for the sum total of the intellectual possessions of the human race. John boldly connects Jesus with this, and credits him with being its manifestation in the flesh. The "Logos," or "Word," is perhaps best translated for our understanding by our word "mind." "In the beginning was mind, and

mind was with God and mind was God. By mind, or intelligent purpose, were all things made, and without it was not anything made. In mind was life; and in mind is the light of men. . . . Mind in the infinite ever comes to mind in the finite, and mind in the finite comprehends it not"—or in part—"but to as many as comprehend it, mind becomes power unto ever-expanding life. The mind was clothed in flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld its glory, the glory like to the glory of the Father, full of grace and truth."

Pagan thinkers speculated as to the source of the knowledge held by the race, which body of knowledge they termed the "Logos," the "Word." John boldly assumes that mind, the capacity to hold knowledge, is the essence of that God whom the Hebrews had discovered to be the creator of the heavens and the earth,—that God whom Jesus taught was the universal Father. As the term "Logos" is used in the opening of the book of John it means the whole mind of God; but for the practical purposes of men it is limited to that

part of God's mind in which his children are permitted to share. As the sun in the centre of the solar system rays forth its light incessantly, lighting the earth, the moon, and all the stars of the heavens, so God's mind rays itself forth incessantly, enlightening the minds of all created in his image.

It seems clearly evident from its results in us that this mind of God transmitted to us is comprehensive of much besides pure reason. It includes our emotional nature, our wills, and our imagination. It is to this divine mind in men that we must credit all the religious processes and ideas and convictions which we have traced. It is simply describing differently the same thing to say that this mind which man has from God is that which makes all thinking men religious; is that which compelled the progressive ideas of God embodied in the Hebrew scriptures; is that which, by reasonable processes, convinces us of the power and knowledge of God; and moves us also by reasonable processes to believe in the goodness of God, even when we have a vast array of

facts in opposition to such belief. The whole religious process in humanity is the progress of a self-revealing God. The process seems to us inexcusably slow and painful; but occasionally we catch a glimpse of its glory.

It was only a part of the mind of God which was clothed in the flesh in Jesus; just as it is only a part of the mind of God that is rayed forth into the mind of any individual. We have no reason to think that Jesus knew more of the natural sciences or of history than did the men of his day. It is useless to look to him for explanations of the origins of matter or of life or of evil. Jesus was a religious teacher, and did not concern himself about anything else. His message was concerning God and man, their mutual relations, and the relations of men to men. His appeal was to the consciousness of truth planted in the human mind,—the intelligence, the affections and the moral sense. He spoke with an authority based upon a knowledge of what is in men. The first essential of his message is the Fatherhood of God. His message is of

a perfect Father, and of his treatment of children obedient and disobedient. The Father establishes the moral standards. He rewards obedience and punishes disobedience. He loves, he forgives, he helps. The sole desire of the Father is righteousness; that right action, and that right state, which is like his own. The well-being or the ill-being of every child depends upon his doing or refusing to do the Father's will. The Father's kingdom of righteousness, which it is the privilege of his children to help establish, is the object of their universal effort; and the beauty of holiness is to be their common joy.

Jesus teaches that men may so live as to be useful to God, and to give God pleasure. The life useful and pleasing to him is that of the pure heart and the good works. Jesus has very little to say of ceremony, except in condemnation; very little to say of praise and worship, though he used both faithfully. The pure heart is in itself worship in spirit and in truth. There is call for faith, for confession, for obedience, and for prayer. Faith is the

recognition of God as a Father present with us, demanding goodness and rewarding it, asking us to depend upon him, to trust him, to rest in him so absolutely that we can be anxious or troubled for nothing. Its fruitage is the peace which passes understanding. Confession is the simple acknowledgment by word and deed of responsibility to God and hope in him, and of co-operation with him for establishing his kingdom. Prayer is the constant asking of wisdom and help from God that we may do his will. Our good lives and our good work are to be for the Father's purposes and by the Father's help. Obedience is that which keeps us acceptable children of our Father in heaven.

Jesus said that he came to direct men into this Godly life, and he defined the conditions and the experiences of it. In his Sermon on the Mount Jesus took up the especially living features of the Hebrew commandments, and showed that the keeping of them which is pleasing to God is not outward and formal. It is the kind of keeping which enters into the spirit of the law.

It admits of no sophistry. It is the mind working truthfully. It is the perfect conduct coming from the perfect heart. In a nobler sense than Burns conceived,

> "The heart ay's the part ay,
> That makes us right or wrang."

What Jesus asks is not the balancing of the good a man may do over against the evil. A single reservation a man may make for evil vitiates all that is good. A man to please God must give his whole heart to God. He must commit himself to absolute righteousness. He must be perfect, even as his Father in heaven is perfect.

It may be objected that it is not within the wisdom or the power of man to live the perfect life. It is within his power to form the perfect purpose to do so. Jesus never lowers this standard. He makes no compromise with sin. Wherever men fail of this lofty standard of perfection, unlimited forgiveness is offered upon condition of repentance and the

renewal of the perfect purpose. No number of failures can limit God's mercy, if the perfect purpose is resumed. Repentance is the opening of a mind closed to God, that God may manifest himself to it in power. The essential nature of forgiveness is that it leaves a man with a perfect start for a perfect future, and with a sense of help.

It is for the sake of this future that God clears up the past. No evil-doing is so dreadful that God will not gladly forgive it if the man truly repents. Forgiveness is a work wrought in the spiritual nature of the guilty party, in his intelligent capacity of knowing and feeling and willing. Forgiveness is not a matter of bookkeeping; but a matter of forming anew, or of re-charging with power, the spiritual nature. Its purpose is to save from future wrong doing, though incidentally it may save from punishment. Its nature is the re-alignment of those forces which God has given to man of his own attributes, that they may work for the same holy ends in man that they do in God.

Jesus taught that God is no respecter of persons,—Jew, Gentile, black or yellow. All men are created children of God. All are equally within the embrace of his love. He may even not love the obedient children more than the disobedient, but their obedience enables him to send forth to them by mental channels more of his life.

In a vital sense a man by alignment with God becomes a new kind of creature. Jesus spoke of it as being born anew. In the experience a man recognises God's goodness toward him in every sensation and emotion which goes to make up his life. He responds with an outgoing love which calls every faculty into strenuous exercise to express itself. The love for God gives the created world a new meaning as an expression of the Creator. It often seems to the changed man like a new world, since things before meaningless now speak to him of God, and the more he interests himself in the world the more intimately and joyously it speaks. The tasks of life by which the daily bread is earned, however humble, are

filled with a sense of worth. All human relations are sanctified. The transformed man has love in his heart for all his fellows. It is his life to express this love. Love becomes the fulfilling of the law; but it becomes far more. It lifts a man into a plane of living above law. The Christian man will not only do no ill to his neighbour, because the love in his heart obliterates every desire to do so, but he is moved by his love constantly to accomplish positive good. He is now the human, transformed by a living union with God into the divine. He partakes of God's desire that all men may turn from the unrest of disobedience and share in the joy of this new life. The blessed estate which he has found, he wants all others to find. He is a messenger of good news to the extent of his powers. This active co-operation with God for his kingdom is so essentially a part of his life that the great American poet of religious experience could say,

"The soul is lost that 's saved alone."

The light of these truths shone into men's minds before the coming of Jesus, but he brought them out with vivid clearness and tremendous power. Men no longer have excuse for walking in darkness. He came with the light of truth. We know it to be truth only as it satisfies our cravings by opening up a way of endless progress toward that perfect and absolute which we conceive in God. He assumes that the spiritual unity into which the obedient man enters, lifts him above the order of the material and temporal. An element of the God-life into which man thus enters is its eternal nature. God having reasonably created him for this essential unity with himself, and he having agreed to the covenant, and entered into experience of divine life, God will never cast him off. Such act is unbelievable. Because God lives he will live also. He has become an essential part of things everlasting. He has entered into their grasp and swing. He has "passed from death unto life."

In addition to this wonderful teaching there

was, so far as the Gospels show, an exalted living which puts Jesus as an historic person in a unique place. He is the supreme example of the possibilities of the divine nature with which God has endowed us. As an historic personage he was under the limitations of the flesh like ourselves. Yet in his own day no man convicted him of wrong doing, though fierce and shrewd enemies sought to do so continually. After the searchlight has been thrown upon his record for eighteen centuries, men do not now question the integrity of his life. He himself never expressed a sense of wrong doing, but was ever conscious of his own moral integrity. In his sense of unbroken unity with God, and in the peace and confidence of this, Jesus was unique. He seemed also unique in unselfishness. His life was a life of service. He loved; he helped. He did nothing for self-display, though much to call attention to the power of God; and he did nothing for selfish ends. Flawless love is always his motive. This love turned not aside from the shame and the pain of the cross.

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

Can we dismiss thus easily all that lies behind the death of Jesus, and that symbol, the cross, which has been the most potent symbol for good the world has even seen? And in a reasonable religion must we thus dismiss it? I think not. Holding to the belief that the death of Jesus was a unique act in the process of the regeneration of the world, which process is limited in its method to the purely moral regeneration of individual men, we find a key to the meaning of the cross in the words of Jesus, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me."

That means two things: that a man must get his mind away from himself and his selfish interests in order to enter into life; and that there is no entrance into life except through pain or travail or suffering. In order to live a man must centre his interests in the purpose of God; and when he has done so, he will find that he has entered the way of

travail. He will be compelled to shoulder his part of the burdens and woes of the world, and put his strength into the battle against evil. The required measure of his devotion is the strength of his life. In this travail the cross signifies that he is in fellowship with the eternal mind, that God is a suffering God. If any human parent can watch the painful conflict in a little child involved in the yielding of a stubborn self-will to the will of the parent, without suffering, it is because the heart of the parent is harder than the heart of God. It is probable that God suffers in the testing of every human soul, that there is travail in heaven, with joy, over every birth into the kingdom. The problem of evil is in figure the whole universe groaning and travailing together in pain, on the way to perfection. The need that Jesus should suffer in order that his work should be wrought out to adequacy, reasonably rests on this fact, that suffering, even the suffering of God, is of necessity involved in the tragic work of the perfecting of souls. But if God suffers it is because he

chooses to, and reasonably chooses to, because it adds worth to his character. The facts of life being as they are, no man could be satisfied with a Supreme being who rejoiced with him when he rejoiced, but who could not, or would not, suffer with him when he suffered.

So is it not true that the mind of man in its quest after God finds in Jesus, as in no other, that which it ideally demands in God, absolute morality expressing itself in perfect love? Is not he who thus had the perfection of God to the extent possible in human limitations, also that perfect ideal which man holds for himself? Are not the two one? If man is created in God's likeness; if man's nobler life in the things of his mind is simply a sharing of the mind of God, the two must be one. It is then reasonable to say that Christ is of one essence with the Father, and we are also exalted to the dignity of saying that we may become of like essence.

There is one mind, or divine intelligence. It is in its fulness in God, and it was not at all depleted in him because it was uniquely in

Jesus, and is in measure in all men. It is simply historic to say that the Jesus of history was that mind embodied in the flesh, in order that he might be the light of life to humanity, and that in his life and death he might manifest the nature of God in self-sacrificing love,—a motive to quicken all the divine faculties with which man is endowed, that these faculties may develop into God's eternal and perfect life.

The writer of this book would ask no one to be a slave of the letter. If because of custom in phraseology any man is helped by substituting "the person of God" for "the mind of God," let him do it, and insist that it was the very person of God that strove to make itself or himself known in Jesus, and that strives to make himself known in all men.

The mind in human limitations is always slow to observe the normal and the lawful, and is searching for the unnatural or spectacular. There is increasing conviction that God never resorts to these things; but it is equally true that the human intellect is not

sufficient to define the possibilities of the normal. It may be that the historic Jesus, whom men have striven so long to class with the dramatic, is simply the ultimate normal. As he in his development escaped disobedience and condemnation, it may be the ultimate purpose of God that all men shall escape these in their development; so that Christ is a forerunner of that sinless glory which is to be the ultimate lot of the human race. His divineness is simply the same as theirs is to be. He is one before the time to be their light and help.

In order that Jesus should be such a light and help, and guide and way, it was necessary that he should be actually human, subject to temptation, liable to sin, that he should be born of woman, learn at a mother's knee, and come to the fuller knowledge of God and life in ways open to all men. We have reason to think that such conditions were fulfilled. It would seem to disjoint this whole scheme of thinking, and render to a large degree meaningless the teaching of Jesus, to exalt his per-

son to a sphere of divineness out of the range of human experience and to consider his mission to men simply spectacular. Such conception of Jesus would strip his example of power to arouse the moral powers in men and to lead them on to the perfection of God.

Is Christ now alive and interested in his followers among men? Our whole reasoning leaves us with the conviction that God is the God of the living and not of the dead, that to be a sharer of God's mind is to be a sharer of his life. We believe our loved ones who died in the Lord are alive. Just what the activities and interests of any of these are, we cannot say, but it is not natural for us to think our loved ones have forgotten us, and it is not difficult to think that Christ in his unique fulness of the mind of God, may exercise a special and unique interest in the welfare of his own.

It seems true that the direct inspiration of the great leaders in the Christian church, from St. Paul onwards, has been the sense of the

presence of God in the person of Jesus Christ, working with them mightily for his kingdom, and the message of these men has been that of a present Christ, a comfort in sorrow, a saviour in temptation, a leader and helper in action. Holding the unity of God in the background of our minds, we give emphasis to different phases of God's activity by calling him the Creator in relation to his universe, the Father in relation to his human family, the Holy Spirit in his approach to the inner consciousness, and Christ in his relation to the reign of righteousness in the world, for which purpose the church is an agent. The Christian life is action directed by faith, and faith is imagination in sacred use. Each individual, as has been said, must give character and location to his conception of deity by the imagination. So men are free, and should gladly be allowed a generous freedom, to think of the Father in heaven when they pray, and of Jesus as their friend on earth while they toil and rejoice and suffer. In its reaching after its divine possibilities we

believe it is the simple and natural way for the mind to apply directly to God, rather than to Christ, and to pray to him; though its conception of God's attitude toward it can be known incomparably better through the revelation in Jesus Christ, than in any other way.

The response of our inner human craving for truth to the person of Jesus, does not bind us to belief in every letter of the narratives of the Gospels concerning him. It is probably as true of the Gospels as of the rest of the Bible,

"The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life."

Mystery surrounds the production of the Gospels, confusion exists in them. The stories of miracles, in our day, do not help men with modern minds to faith in Jesus. Some men could believe in Jesus now, and believe what he said about God, more easily, if the miracles were not included in the Gospel narratives. I think the same can be said of the story of the resurrection. The bodies of our dead return to the dust from whence they came. Any

transformation from earthly bodies to heavenly bodies is outside of understanding. Yet in the historic development of the church the miracles had a prominent place and served a purpose, and the first foundation stone of that church was the testimony of eye witnesses to the resurrection of Jesus' body. We may pause to note that as our faith is established on entirely other grounds our belief in the miracles is not essential; and then pass on to see that too important a matter is opened up here to be dismissed thus lightly.

The miracles of the Bible may be divided into three classes: the nature miracles in which there seem to be abrogation of the laws of nature; the miracles of healing; and the miracles of raising the dead, including the resurrection of Jesus.

There is literary artifice in the records of the miracles, as for instance, the evil spirits engaging in conversation with Jesus in the story of the Gadarene swine. The human mind ever seeks the dramatic, and has a tendency to describe the normal in terms of the

dramatic. The stories of the miracles were formulated orally, and passed on in tradition, and were edited and re-edited through a period of at least thirty years before they were brought into their present form. Each recorded nature miracle very likely had a basis of actual happening which was in accord with law.

As we are informed at present of the power of the mind to cure diseases, we cease to wonder that Jesus, endowed in unique measure with the mind of God, should have exercised this power of healing wondrously. On the other hand we should be surprised if he had not.

In the miracles of raising the dead, we are dealing with things whose laws we do not understand. How consciousness can depart from a mind in sleep is a mystery unsolved. It is as great a mystery as that life should return to a body after having left it; but we are so accustomed to the departure of consciousness and its return, that we cease to wonder. The scientists do not pretend to know what matter

is. Consciousness, life, matter, all are mysteries, in that we know little of the laws which govern them. It may be possible that the vital spark may go and come as consciousness goes and comes. There may be celestial bodies as well as terrestrial, with changes in the twinkling of an eye.

This leads us to the resurrection, the most important of the miracles. Men are asking if Jesus arose from the dead, and if so, how? and are insisting on an answer. We shall give it. When the vital spark was driven from Jesus' body on the cross he continued to live in spirit, as do all who have entered into spiritual unity with God. The shock of Jesus' tragic death, and the subduing and concentrating power of a great sorrow, brought the minds of Jesus' followers into a condition where his previous teaching concerning immortality gained startling vividness. What he had said concerning his continuing life, and continuing companionship and help, received new meaning. This revelation dazed the faithful few with its flood of light. Jesus'

continuing life became very real, so that they had vivid sense of his presence, especially when they were in fellowship. These experiences were the bases of the narratives of his appearances recorded in the Gospels. St. Stephen had like experience at his martyrdom, and St. Paul at his conversion. Such experience was common to the Christian Martyrs, and visions of Christ are the common privilege of men of faith in all time. It is an unnumbered company who see and hear their Master in greater or less vividness and distinctness, in temptation, in times of trial, in the hour of death, or in the crises of revelation. There visions are facts. We reasonably believe in a living Christ who is ever present. He may possess a celestial body.

It is significant, moreover, that St. Paul, an early interpreter, and the greatest interpreter, of the meaning of the life and death of Jesus, interpreted the cross and the resurrection in terms of the moral and spiritual experience of the human soul, in becoming dead to sin and becoming alive to righteousness and to

God. The fullest religious experience in the flesh is that men consider their natural selfish motives dead by crucifixion with Christ, and consider that they are alive from the dead by the power of the risen Christ living in them, filling them with the divine motives of the Son of God.

. . . . . .

Finally, and this is the place for emphasis, it is the change wrought in the spiritual nature of him who follows Jesus' teachings and his life, and in following finds light and life for himself, which is the satisfactory witness to Jesus' genuineness,—that he was what he claimed to be, one sent of God to enlighten the world, to save it from disobedience and death, and to hasten it on the way to the peace and the joy of the absolute life of God.

# V

## REVELATION

THE contention of the preceding chapters is that God reveals himself directly to the minds of men, and thus only; and that men are able to recognise this revelation, to understand its meaning and purpose, and to co-operate with God both in receiving it and in making it operative for its purposes. In this case the conditions regulating the giving of wisdom and the taking of wisdom are most important.

The relation of the divine mind to human minds we may believe is just like the relation of two human minds, and the impartation of knowledge between them is by the same methods. We may say that the impartation of the contents of one mind to another is by conversation, or by communion; it is

by gradual approach to mutual understanding by explanation or instruction. In religious terminology prayer is the word which describes this process. Prayer is limited in its bearing to the human side of the process, and we describe the divine side of the process as the answering of prayer, though the better term for this is revelation. Prayer on the part of men is something more than petitioning God; it is listening for answer, it is opening the whole mind, that is the whole spiritual nature of man, Godward; it is the indication of purpose to put the wisdom received into expression and action. No matter how wise a parent may be, it is impossible for one to impart more wisdom to a child than a child will receive and use, so what a child receives from a parent depends not so much upon the parent's wisdom or desire to impart as upon the receptivity of the mind of the child. In the same way it is the teaching of Jesus that God is not only able to impart the wisdom which fills the human being with fulness of his life, but he is anxious to impart this divine wisdom

which to receive is life. "Ask and ye shall receive." "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" The responsibility for receiving rests with men and is subject to their will.

If we accept literally the statement of Jesus quoted above, as reported in the Gospel of Luke, it will lead to clear thinking as to the conditions under which the human mind is enlightened by the divine mind. In the first place the request for right things, or rather for the one right thing, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God, the life of God in us, is always answered. There is no chance or probability about the matter. In the second place it is for this life of God, or mind of God, that we ought to ask, and for nothing else. It seems a legitimate interpretation of the teaching of Jesus that proper prayer is absolutely sure of answer, and that the request for the Holy Spirit is the only proper prayer. It is, moreover, most essential that all should com-

prehend these conditions of prayer, as the chief cause of discouragement in effort to live the religious life is that prayer is offered amiss and fails of answer.

As has been suggested in discussing God's goodness, God does not interrupt the order of nature in the physical universe because men ask him. We may assume that God does not heal the sick unless it can be done by lawful methods, for it is probably seldom that a premature death occurs without some friend of the dying having offered sincere and agonising prayer for the divine interference to stay disease. We have no reason to think that God uses telepathy or other than known means to carry a suggestion which we make to him concerning the good of another to the mind of that other. It seems even safe to say that prayer is answered only through the instrumentality of him who prays. He gets his answer to the one proper prayer in an enduement of the Holy Spirit, or of the mind of God, or of the wisdom and power of God, and it is this Holy Spirit which enables him to

accomplish those things which otherwise were beyond his powers. And in this process, it is not that prayer influences God to give, but that by prayer we open our own minds to receive. When a man puts his mind into an attitude of true request, God usually gives him marching orders; that is, the Spirit of God reveals to his mind something which he can do to accomplish his desires; and the question of the attaining of his desires hinges on whether he will do that which God suggests. The shirker gets nothing from God.

In the social order apparently God works only in co-operation with human agencies. We do not need to beseech him to pour out his Spirit, that is, to impart more of the divine mind to the human mind, upon us or upon others. He is more anxious to do this than we are to ask him. He is perfectly beneficent and is revealing his mind to all his children just as fully as men will permit him. It is for ourselves that we should ask the wisdom and power of God, and for any others whom we may reasonably hope will, by the

common means by which suggestions travel, know our feeling of their needs. The essential prayer for each is this: "God help me to do my best."

This a man may ask unceasingly; and there is no possible experience of his life in which God will not help him. This he should ask over his eating and drinking, that these may be ordered for his effectiveness as a servant of God. This he should ask over the task of hand, and the task of mind; over his occupation, his business venture, his influence in his home, his influence on his daily associates, his influence in all social and civic relations. If football is a legitimate game to play, the football field is a legitimate place for prayer, and it is reasonable that God will help him who prays to do his best there as well as elsewhere. It seems reasonable and by experience proven that divine mind does act upon human mind to the strengthening of the body, to the clearing of thought, to the strengthening of the will, to the arousing of the affections. So asking cures physical ills, gives physical endur-

ance for the passing of crises, enables men to decide quickly and act shrewdly, saves in the moment of temptation, enables men to overcome deep-seated vices, and melts all the envy and malice and hatred out of the heart so that a man is able to live in the blessed state of hearty affection for all the world.

An inquiring mind might ask if on the theory of prayer thus enunciated, prayer would not increase a man's ability to accomplish an evil deed, like the cracking of a bank or the counterfeiting of a note. It would seem reasonable to answer yes, were it not for the fact that sincere prayer for an evil purpose is rendered impossible by the conscience. Sincerity in prayer involves obedience to moral sense, and evil purpose is disobedience. The two states of mind coincidently are impossible. But in all cases where men are honest even though mistaken, the law of answer to prayer seems to hold good. In the American Civil War we can believe prayer aided each of the contending forces to more effective fighting,

though both could not be fighting in a just cause.

And this leads to a fact of importance. Evidently God does not refuse to honour prayer simply because there is error, or imperfect knowledge, associated with the asking. If he did so, little prayer formed by human mind could be answered, for the mind is incomplete and knows only in part. We reasonably believe that where moral sincerity exists in pagan religious forms, or in the extravagant forms which Christianity sometimes assumes, God does not cut off revelation, or withhold light nor power, but co-operates with the human mind in the largest measure possible consistent with goodness and truth. For this reason in religious healing anything which serves as an effective suggestion becomes a means to effect results. So a shrine with reputation. the bone of a saint, or a foolish and untrue religious formula, may effect the cure of some bodily ills. And of course under this law a fraudulent relic is as effective as a legitimate one.

Prayer, the conscious opening of the mind Godward, becomes a prerequisite to spiritual enlightenment, or revelation. God limits his giving only to the capacity of the receiver, and the willingness of the receiver to put wisdom into action. Prayer is then essential to religious life, and wherever there is prayer there is enlightenment; and where any man prays and fulfils the conditions of receiving, God leads him on into ever greater fulness of his own life. This accounts for the fact of individual men appearing in marked power of wisdom and saintliness all along the pathway of the world's history. It is not strange then that prayer, or fellowship with God, the opening of the human to the divine mind, the condition of revelation, holds a first place in the religion Jesus lived and taught.

"Prayer is the Christian's vital breath."

Too much emphasis can never be put upon its value. If rightly understood, too much credit can never be given its power. A man enters upon the highest plane possible to his

human limitations, enters most fully into his divine estate, when he humbly and earnestly undertakes to formulate in words, the vehicle of thinking, the profound desires, and aspirations, and needs, of his own spiritual nature and the spiritual nature of his fellow men. It should be expected in prayer that the inner illumination of the soul should become apparent on the features, and that the man who is consciously much with God should be the man of spiritual power.

The conditions under which men obtain knowledge of physical laws illustrate the fact that God makes men co-operate with him and work for all the knowledge they get. It is reasonable that the wonderful discoveries of the last century, by which steam and electricity and the explosive engine have come to serve men in multitudes of ways, are actually, as the word implies, discoveries by the minds of men, of things known to the divine mind from the foundation of the world. In physical matters God permits men to learn solely by experimentation; and the same fact is largely true,

if not wholly true, in spiritual matters; but in spiritual attributes each individual man seems so akin to God that there is a quickness of perception, a freedom of action, a swiftness of progress in his individual experiences, which is denied him in the conquest over physical things.

As prayer is a means to revelation, inspiration is a result of revelation. Inspiration is the impulse of men who have received a measure of wisdom from the mind of God to speak that wisdom and to make record of that wisdom for the instruction of other men. All moral and religious instruction by word or act is inspired, but for definiteness we use the word inspiration in a technical sense to imply the impulse which moved men to speak and to write the literature known as the Bible. The Bible is as truly a unique book as Jesus is a unique person. The Old Testament is a selected part of the literature of the ancient Hebrew people, and the New Testament is a fragmentary record of the life and teaching of Jesus and of the founding of the Christian

church. The two testaments belong together because Jesus entered into the religious inheritance of his Hebrew people, derived inspiration from their literature, and started his religious conceptions from their ideals. These Bible books have persisted and will persist because of their inherent quality, and this quality is confessedly the unique revelation of the mind of God. The Bible is fitted for instruction because it is so thoroughly human. In it the mind of God is so revealed through the medium of human minds, and so tested by human experiences, that it becomes effective in instruction pertaining to faith, and pertaining to purity of thinking, to breadth and depth of affection, and to righteous willing. It seems self-evident in order that revelation might be fitted to the comprehension and needs of human minds, that it must come through the channels of human minds. No mechanical or spectacular revelation could serve the purpose. The Bible is surcharged with spiritual power: to feed on it is to be nourished by the bread of life; to walk by it is to walk in the light

of life; to comprehend it is to have the mind illumined by the mind of God. That it might be effective for these purposes, in the making of the Bible the lawful processes of the mind are not broken or transcended. God instructed the praying men of old in the same way he instructs all praying men; wisdom came to Jesus by the same way that it comes to all, he received because he prayed and obeyed. In searching the secrets of revelation the mind reaches limits but not spiritual contradictions. For purposes of instruction the Bible is made rich and powerful by the literary artifices of poetry, parable, fable, romance, prophecy, purposeful history and apocalypse. As imagination is a grand essential to religious faith, we should not be surprised that in the literature of revelation we should find fiction used to awaken and develop men's minds, even as men use fiction to awaken and develop the minds of children.

The mind of man has long craved a more intimate and positive and complete revelation of God. Men have wanted the proof of his

being and character revealed to the senses. Job bewailed that he could not find him to plead his cause before him. In our practical age modern men would like to have God come into some business office and dictate a book of moral and religious instruction which could be printed topically in alphabetic order, so that men might know what was desired of them, and upon what conditions. Some would like to have God appear in three distinct spirits in three distinct bodies. But that is not God's way. It would be a trivial way. He chooses the grander way of the purely spiritual revelation in the inner processes of the mind. And the sensible thing for all men is to awake to this fact, and to cease the search for God in the spectacular, and in mechanical signs, and to set themselves seriously to the task of fulfilling the conditions for the fuller revelation which God constantly strives to make of himself individually and by the lawful processes of the mind.

# VI

## FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY

THE most satisfactory way of accounting for mind in man, is to think it a rudimental reproduction of the mind of God. The most satisfactory view of the purpose of human life is that each individual has capacity to develop this mind eternally into ever increasing fulness of the mind of God. The human mind very likely has no conscious possession of all the attributes of the divine mind, but it is reasonable to think that it has no attributes which the divine mind does not possess. The mind is customarily divided into three constituent parts, the intelligence, the affections, the will. The intelligence and the affections combined become the moral consciousness. The moral problem is to maintain the will in peaceful alliance and harmony

with this consciousness. When these agree the life is moral; when these disagree the life is immoral.

When we examine the moral processes of the mind we are convinced that the will is the crucial factor, that our moral development depends not so much upon what we know or upon what we feel, as upon what we will. We are not held so directly responsible for knowledge and for feeling as we are for willing. In choices where no moral principle is involved the intelligence moves the will through hope of gain, or the emotions move the will by inclination. In choices where there is a right and a wrong involved, an ought and an ought not, the intelligence and the affections are always joined in moral consciousness in their pressure on the will.

The issue of each individual life depends upon the direction the will gives to it. The will directs the life to usefulness or uselessness, to righteousness, or to iniquity. The will is to the person what the guiding apparatus is to the motor vehicle, or what the rudder is to the ship. In

the field of morality the will always has before it the better and the worse. It exerts itself in the realm of the "I ought" and the "I can." The will is essentially the man. The active will is the live, effective man. The strong will for the right things is the righteous man. But although intelligence and feeling control the will, yet the will constantly reacts on these.

We have stated that reasonably the method of spiritual development in us is the ever larger appropriation of the divine qualities of the mind of God. We have no reason to doubt that the manner of impartation of the mind of the Creator to the mind of the creature is the same as the process by which a teacher makes known his mind to the mind of the pupil, or by which in fellowship mind influences mind. In neither case can wisdom be forced upon the mind which does not want it, and which will not put forth some effort to receive it.

No man receives more of the mind of God than the rudimental capacity to know, unless he wills deliberately to accept these spiritual

endowments, and makes voluntary effort to attain them. It is then the will which opens toward God the gates of the soul for the inflowing of his life, or which closes the gates.

It is not consistent with our opinion of the goodness of God to believe that he would create a human being with capacity to receive his divine life, without making it possible for him to attain that life. So we may say that God puts his own infinite mind within the reach of all, that he will give intelligence and affection above measure, and join these in a moral sense increasing in power to influence the will ever more strongly toward right choices. But God has endowed man also with power to thwart all this process, to reject knowledge, to harden his feelings, to stifle his emotions, to defy with his will,—and thus to render abortive God's purpose to lead him into divine life.

The will is then the most vitally important factor of the spiritual nature with which God has endowed his creatures. It was the will of God which was exercised in the creation of

all things. Will is the eternal concomitant of action. Will is what brings things to pass. Man, sharing the will of God along with other spiritual faculties, becomes possessed in measure with creative power. In one field God has permitted men to create that which is not. This field for each one is his own personality. Man is self-creative. At least upon his will depends the conscious yielding of his life to God for God's purposes, and also upon his will depends that conscious effort after the life of God which results in the in-filling of the human life with the divine. Perhaps we may define the whole spiritual process as the intelligence and affections reaching after God, the will opening the personality to God, and inviting God in, the intelligence listening to his voice of wisdom, the affections appreciating the glory of his righteousness, and the will exercised again in choosing him as its chief good; and thus all spiritual factors interacting, the spiritual man, in full response to God, is being developed into the fulness of the life of God.

When in this same figure of description we put the person of Christ in the place of God, or speak of God as the Holy Spirit, we do no violence if we have come to a reasonable conception of the unity of the Godhead. In the historic Jesus, in whom was revealed the mind of God uniquely in the flesh, we see in concrete lines adapted for our human life, those graces of God's character after which we aspire. Jesus aids the human mind to grasp that which in God is abstract and difficult. But Jesus ever made himself a means to the conception of the Father, and never an obstacle to such conception, and never a substitute for such conception. The Holy Spirit is a name of God applied to him in that particular office in which he deals with the inner spiritual nature of men. To think of the Holy Spirit in this way prevents confusion.

The most fiercely fought of all the battles of theology have been over the freedom of the human person to accept or to reject the overtures of God, or to choose between good and evil. Marked change has, however, come

in the currently accepted opinions of God's relation to the universe, and his method of creation, and also over man's conception of his own spiritual nature. God was formerly conceived as dwelling apart from his universe, having created it and started it on its course, with an eternal and complete causation, which should guide it along a course preconceived and precisely established from beginning to end, so that it should be impossible that anything could happen in nature or to man other than as the Almighty foreknew and predestined in the beginning. The newer conception of the relation of God to his world is rather that of the Spirit dwelling in the body, every atom in creation and every natural law and spiritual impulse being the expression of the presence of God. Creation rather than a finished work, becomes a progressive work, in which God is eternally active. The spiritual verities, thought, emotion, will, love, hate, faith, repentance, grace, life and death, and all other things of the mind, are expressions of God acting continuously.

It is reasonable to believe that God has a purpose in humanity which shall be accomplished in its general plan, but which has that elasticity in details which makes it possible that the issue in each individual life is contingent upon the action of the will which God has given to each; he having parted with that will in the case of each man so that he will not coerce it, but surrounding it with due influences, will permit it to choose in freedom, – to accept his life and live, or to reject his life and forfeit life. It seems possible that God has left men so free that he does not even know what any one of us will choose, though he has established the inevitable outcome of our choices in life or its opposite, even as we choose.

Though our choices may be effective to establish our destiny, yet they are within narrow limitations. Just how free is man? He seems to be as free as an animal turned out to pasture in an enclosure from which it cannot escape. The animal is free to go where it chooses, and its owner does not know

where it may choose to go, but its liberty is limited by the enclosure. So man is free, but he has limitations on all sides. In such an enclosure for an animal there might be good pasture in one place and trees and water; while in another place the land might be barren. In other places there might be precipices down which the animal could fall to be maimed or killed; or morasses into which the animal could stumble to drown after terrible suffering. The animal could therefore in perfect freedom choose happy and prosperous life, or it could choose the barren land and starvation, or it could choose danger and find death.

A man's freedom may be comparable. We are free, but we cannot get off the earth, nor away from death, nor hide from our conscience, nor escape God. We may choose God's will and find fulness of life; we may reject his will and starve to death by remaining in conditions spiritually barren, or we may destroy ourselves by violent courses of disobedience. Men generally agree that all who are normal and sane are endowed with under-

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standing which makes them responsible for their choices.

But, acknowledging man's responsibility, we are aware that there is pressure brought to bear upon both the side of good and the side of evil to influence the will. We know we ought to choose the good, but there is the inclination present so often to do the evil. We have seen that it is reasonable to believe that this is God's world, and that with all things else, the environment of every man's moral consciousness is of God's ordering. If a man disobeys and meets with loss thereby, I do not see how legitimate thinking can excuse God from ultimate responsibility. Though God may hold man absolutely responsible within the limits of his freedom, yet God is responsible for trusting him with that which may prove his undoing. He made the loss possible. He raised up the precipices and hollowed out the morasses, and left both with proper warnings, but unguarded. Clear thinking puts God before all things, and takes all things as his; it believes God was in

the beginning unconditioned, and is restrained at any time only by conditions which are self-imposed. Human reason finds in this thinking a problem too great; it cannot justify what God as an ultimate and absolutely responsible ruler allows to happen.

The reason meets not simply limits, but obstacles. This is a part of the problem of evil, which has previously been dealt with. I need simply to repeat, that the most reasonable view of this moral conflict which is the lot of the human personality, is that God has subjected us to it in hope, that the worth of the quality which is developed in man by overcoming evil justifies the trial, that only by a victory in such a test can a man become worthy to share the eternal life of God.

But what of those who fail in the testing? Certainly some men, having the free opportunity, choose evil instead of good. So far as we may judge they reject God, leaving him out of their lives; and thus separate themselves from conscious connection with the source of life. Some choose to destroy them-

selves, seemingly body and soul, in deliberate and defiant disobedience of God's witness in their inner consciousness. And as by seeming law the will in choosing good is ever strengthened in its inclination to choose the good, until we consider it fixed in its purpose; so the will in choosing evil, seems to lose ever more and more of its power and of its inclination to the good until it seems established in evil.

What is God going to do with the person who has become established in evil, and is seemingly incapable of responding to his appeals for righteousness? The tendency of modern theology is to teach a final bringing of all men into obedience to God, and into life in fellowship with him. By what process, however, is God to win back to love of him and to obedience, those who have defiantly hardened their natures against his truth, his love, and his righteous willing? Will he force them?

> "The sweet persuasion of his voice
> Respects thy sanctity of will."

It seems entirely contrary to his methods of procedure to force his gift of life on any. If, as we have reason to believe, this higher life is essentially virtue won through freedom in the mighty conflict which day by day involves us all, it is something which in its very nature cannot be forced upon any person. Any theory of universal salvation seems, therefore, inconsistent with any freedom which leaves possible a determining bias for evil.

Supposing a man has a son whom he desires very much to have become a physician. He may promise the son that every way shall be opened up for him to prepare himself for the profession, and he may urge him to take advantage of the opportunities; but if the boy will not yield himself to the purpose, and plod his slow way through the primary school, the secondary school, the college, and the medical school, but on the contrary, shall refuse to study or shall dawdle, his father can never compel him, or by any means force him into the profession, or force the profession upon him. In the same way it would seem reason-

able that God cannot, consistently with the freedom he has allowed, force any man into divine life, or force divine life upon any man, unless the man chooses, and wills, and works; attaining the end by co-operative effort.

We have exalted Jesus to a unique place as a revealer of the character of God and of his methods of dealing with his children, and we consistently give some weight to his word as to God's dealing with the disobedient. He is not silent. Though in some cases his teaching may have been mistranslated and misinterpreted, yet its general outlines are startlingly vivid. The tares are separated from the wheat and burned. Men who abide not in Christ are as withered branches of the vine, and are gathered and burned. Soul and body may be destroyed in hell. Jesus used expressions and figures of speech current in his day, the most specific of which pointed directly to the valley of Hinnom, outside the walls of Jerusalem, where the rubbish of the city was burned, where the carcasses of dead animals were thrown to be consumed by worms. There

the fire never ceased, for new fuel was constantly added to the flames, and the succeeding generations of worms never died out because new carcasses continually came for them to feed on.

No stronger figure of destruction could be used; but it is destruction, and not torture. The most natural interpretation of Jesus' teaching is that as obedience is the path to abundant and eternal life, to fulness of being; so disobedience is the path to pain, to death, to the absence of being. As the naturally divine elements in the human personality are quickened into ever larger and stronger life by fellowship with the infinite mind in obedience, so these same naturally divine elements shut off from the mind of God by disobedience gradually perish. Immortality is reasonably conditioned upon free choice of righteousness, and the result of persistent deliberate disobedience is death.

It will pay us to look closely at these evil things toward which we are impelled. Man is certainly an animal. In his physical being

a man lives in performing those functions in which an animal finds life. But while we acknowledge our kinship with the lower animals, we do it with a sense of shame, because we are conscious of a dignity which the animals do not possess. We have a nobler endowment of mind.

I think examination will bear out the statement that all the evils against which we struggle in the moral conflict, spring from the animal side of our nature. These are accentuated in us by the fact of moral consciousness. But the moral conflict is simply a battle between the impulses of the earthly body and the moral sense of the heavenly mind. The elemental motives in the animal world as stated before are nutrition and procreation. The elemental motives in men correspond, and out of these spring greed, ferocity, pride, lust, hatred, and the whole family of evil inclinations. This comparison between the animal motives and the evil motives of men is significant. The chasm which separates animals from men is so broad and

deep that the scientists have not explored it yet, and though they feel pretty sure a crossing was made, the way is so much a matter of speculation that there is no resting place upon which to base theological reasoning.

We may take note, however, that the moral conflict is between the things of the flesh and the things of the spirit. The seat of the conflict is the mind. "To be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." It is a conflict, moreover, in which the ultimate result can in this world never be absolute elimination of animal motives, but may be their subjugation to legitimate use. No matter how spiritually minded men may become the race cannot exist and continue without eating and propagating. Again, every child at birth has already co-ordinated in the brain those nerve centres which control motion and sensation, so that the baby begins immediately, and develops naturally, to perform all the animal functions; while the whole structure of the spiritual nature has to be built up in each child by a long and tedious process

of instruction, the child at birth possessing only latent capacity for the process.

The moral and spiritual bulwark against the rule of the animal nature is built up by instruction in speech, leading to thinking, to reasoning, to affection, to moral consciousness, to sense of responsibility, and finally to sense of obligation to the better self, to others, and to God. This bulwark has to be built up in every generation anew, and in every child from its beginning. Were the process to stop for a single generation, the race would drop backward almost to the chaos of beasts in the jungle. This artificial bulwark alone maintains civilisation.

The difference between civilised life and primitive life lies largely in this instruction of the young; but this instruction only prepares the way so that every man, as he attains the age of responsibility, may continue the subjugating and directing of his powers of body and of mind. And he finds the task almost entirely one of the mind; for the mind rules the body, and if a man is able to think

right he will act right; and faith that his intellectual processes are in union with the mind of God, becomes an effective factor to insure success. Yet the victory is not likely to be assured by the winning of one battle, but rather by persistent fighting. Right choice and right willing, renewed again and again after failure, gain an accumulative force which is finally irresistible. Because a man believes God is on the side of right, there is no animal impulse, even no long established habit, which he cannot overcome, by the continual exercise of godly thinking and godly willing,—a process known in religious terminology as repentance. The free working of the mind of God in any man will enable him to subdue the passions of the flesh by the power of the Spirit.

It looks as though the spiritual process was a consummation of that for which all evolution of lower life during countless ages was a preparation. It is one of the unfathomable mysteries why God should have provided the animal body and the animal nature to be the vehicle for the testing and developing

of the divine spirit during its nursery stage in human existence; and the most startling thing is the suggestion that there is enormous waste in the operation.

Human existence is so far as we may judge an intermediate stage between the animal world in which all seems to be mortal, and the celestial realm in which so far as we know all is immortal. Immortality seems to begin in the human stage, but may embrace only a part of the human race. Those who so choose enter into the life of the celestials; those not so choosing go the way of the lower orders of creation. It seems to be possible that the straight gate and the narrow way is a reasonable statement of the way of life.

But it would not be an honest treatment of facts and logic to assume that such view of life, however true so far as it goes, is adequate to satisfy the demands of the human conscience. So far as we can see it does not make provision for those who are irresponsible through reason of immaturity or mental deficiency. Jesus speaks positively and ten-

derly, but indefinitely, in the eighteenth chapter of Matthew, of God's attitude toward these; and our innate belief in God's goodness leads us to think that, however exacting God may be with the responsible, he has provision in his eternal order for the irresponsible.

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It is of course of spiritual life and of spiritual death we are speaking, and as spiritual life is a mental experience, we may ask if there is in the condition of men's minds proof as to whether they are spiritually alive or spiritually dead. Intelligence and reason and logic are common to all sane minds, all men are affectionate and emotional, all men are free to act, so that all are held responsible. These three attributes, thinking, feeling, willing, common to all minds, combine in the moral consciousness, also common to all. As we believe these attributes came from God, we are by the possession of them made responsible to him. These common attributes establish in each the sense of the eternal ought which is

satisfied only by benevolent thinking and benevolent acting. The benevolent mind is a living thing, progressive, with infinite possibilities; it is ever growing and this growing is life. Life then is an experience. It is something men are conscious of; something men can measure in degrees. When men are spiritually alive they know that they are alive, there is no question about it. Is the man on the other hand who refuses to think benevolently, spiritually dead? And is there that in the processes of his mind which is evidence to him or to others that he is dead?

This needs to be considered, for in its primitive stages Christianity is as truly and pointedly a sentence of death as it is a gospel of life. It was a perishing world that Christ and his apostles thought they faced. It was on that basis that they taught and suffered. "That men might not perish," was the keynote to God's attitude toward the world; "that they might by all means save some," was the Apostles' attitude. The motive which moved Christ and the Apostles to the heroic

was the love with which they pleaded with the perishing multitude. Were they under an entirely mistaken conception of God's plan for the race? It seems safe to say that current Protestant theology assumes that they were. Having swung away from belief in future punishment, the majority of religious teachers in liberal and evangelical communions assert universal salvation, in an easy-going, indefinite, and sentimental way. The most common reason given for this position by men who do any thinking upon it, is that the race on this earth is in its infancy, being dealt with as children, scarcely responsible, with possible critical stages before them in other spheres. This thinking hinges back farther upon a conception of the nature of God's goodness, and a belief that he is sentimentally good. This may be true, but God's dealing with men in this life does not indicate it, and it certainly is not the teaching of the New Testament. Another commonly expressed reason for belief in universal salvation is a claim that a spiritual existence cannot cease. This idea of

a necessary immortality was first adopted into Christianity from paganism and continues to persist. It certainly is neither Hebrew nor Christian, and is continued by a questionable application of a physical law to spiritual things.

We see some minds relatively thoughtless; we see some minds exhibiting little affection, and that affection apparently growing less; we see minds weak in will to choose that good, and apparently growing weaker. There seem to be minds so completely hostile to God and man, and so established and corrupted in hostility that they are most unlikely to awaken to love. Men certainly seem dying, or dead, spiritually, but this seeming may be a delusion. We are not able to pass a valid judgment in the matter one way or another, for the simple reason that we have not definite facts as we have for our assurance of spiritual life. But this may not be because death is not as much a fact as life, but because it is a ceasing fact, like a dying flame and not a progressing fact like a living fire; because it

is negative instead of positive; because when it is finished it is nothing instead of something; because it is death instead of life. Men who are spiritually alive know that they are alive; but if men are spiritually dead, they evidently are not aware of their condition. This is in accord with a law in spiritual things, that a man is conscious of that which he has, but not of that which he lacks.

Happily it is not left for us to judge who are obedient unto life, and who are disobedient unto death. We look on the outward appearance, God looks on the heart. Christ made the test the good works which proved the spiritual quality. If there comes an hour when any man realises his lost condition, it may be that he will weep and gnash his teeth at his own folly and stupidity instead of in anger against God.

In physical things God seems to treat good and evil alike. His rain and his sunshine fall equally upon the just and the unjust. Outwardly the godless man is as happily conditioned as the godly man; inwardly the man striving for

obedience is filled with remorse because of his shortcomings, while the disobedient man becomes indifferent to the moral conflict. A wise man has said, "It is not the just but the irresponsible that sleep." May it not be that God makes life worth living to all, even to those who defy him; so that they may reasonably be thankful that they have lived, even if the end of their chosen course is destruction?

If God opens the way for all to attain life, and urges all to enter into it, and then, further, so orders existence that those who refuse to go in, have a good time living, this kindness at least takes the keen edge from any impeachment of God's goodness which lies in the theory of conditional immortality. We can think of a mother having a son who has sinned defiantly against the laws of truth, purity, and love, and who has established himself in vicious ways, and become a curse to himself and to others, so that even his mother might say, "I would he had never been born," and in love and agony might exclaim, "I would he were not." In God's providence, perhaps

also in love and suffering, reasonably such wish may become a fact. We should disabuse our minds of the idea that death is unjust or necessarily undesirable even if in some cases it prove an endless sleep.

Now that we have traced to its legitimate conclusion the clear thinking which rests all responsibility for evil of all sorts ultimately with God, we should face the question squarely, "Is a God who is responsible for evil a God whom it is possible to love?" It is the most serious question raised by honest thinking on religion. We believe it can be answered in the affirmative, and answered in the affirmative finally on the same grounds that we have concluded that God is good and absolutely good, even though we face a multitude of facts in his world which we cannot reconcile with our conceptions of goodness. We are constrained to love God because it puts our nobler aspirations to confusion not to do so. In spite of all difficulties we are constrained because of the nature of our noblest spiritual sense to believe in the reality

of absolute goodness, to believe in the kind of God who is revealed in Jesus and desired by our divine aspirations, because the best in us can find expression only in love of such a God. Such love is the soul's chief good.

But we have suggestions that if we were able to rise to a higher plane of knowledge, to take a wider view of God's plans, we should see that evil is not to God's discredit. Indeed we can believe that all phases of that which we call evil except two,—physical accident and spiritual death,—are ultimately good. Evil in all its forms is a temporary thing, not comparable on like terms with goodness, which is eternal. Physical pain and mental pain are for redemptive purposes as we have shown, and premature death may seem to us an evil simply because we do not know what it means to pass from this life to the next. The ultimate result of these evils may be adorable goodness,—to save from death and to guide into life. The accidental in physical conditions, causing pain, dumbfounds us; but aside from this, the one evil which has no good re-

sult is the evil of rejecting the wisdom and mercy of God, and the pain of this evil is of short duration even if the end is spiritual death. Finally, suffering brings the right-minded man very near to God; and it is through suffering that men often find him, and find life in him, who except for suffering might miss him through indifference. We may believe that all things, even the things we term evil because we must have a name for them, work for good to the right-minded; and that the one hopeless evil, the evil of rejecting God, is immediately man's responsibility, and that even then God vouchsafes to the defiant a merciful death. So a sovereign God of responsibility and of exacting severity is no less a God to be reverenced and to be loved.

The placing of responsibility upon God for all things, including those which we call evil, leads to a new and more reasonable and dignified view of the mission of Jesus to the world. That mission can be considered no longer as though it were an afterthought of

the Eternal, for the straightening out of a tangle, or the clearing up of a disorder, for which tangle or disorder those who entered upon the corrective work had no previous responsibility. The mission of Jesus can now be considered as a mighty factor in a plan of widest sweep and slow and progressive unfolding, a plan beginning with the conception of the human race in the mind of God and ending in the moral perfecting of men in him. Such interpretation of the mission of Jesus is consistent with what he was and what he taught, and puts him in a consistent and potent place in the world order.

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So it may be that, dealing most justly and kindly and generously with those who fail through deliberate disobedience, themselves rejecting the gift of life, God may reward above measure those who are obedient unto the heavenly vision of holiness, in a peace amidst conflict, a courage amidst trials, a power in weakness, a comfort in sorrow, a satisfaction in helpfulness, and a joy in

fellowship with himself; and that the end of these weak beginnings here may be realised in the ages of eternity in a fulness of divine intelligence and love and activity, such as the mind is now unable to conceive, and so of course words fail to describe, but which is suggested in the term, eternal life.

# VII

## THE KINGDOM OF GOD

THE kingdom of God is a social order in which the will of God reigns. It is the children of God living together in the peace and helpfulness and joy befitting intelligent beings. It is self-contradictory to expect right social relations among imperfect individuals. It is impossible to have relations of perfect love among men who are moved by selfishness or by hate. It seems reasonable therefore that the method by which the kingdom is to come is the conversion to righteousness of individuals; that one after another the children of men shall have their minds transformed so that each shall have the same kind of mind which was in Jesus, and shall enter a spiritual oneness with God, thinking his thoughts, partaking ever more of his nature of love, and being willingly dominated by his will.

The kingdom of God is ultimately as universal and eternal as God's expression of himself. We need consider but three aspects of this kingdom, the kingdom in the individual life, the kingdom in the world, and the kingdom into which men enter after death.

Jesus said, "The kingdom of God is at hand"; and in connection with this statement he said, "Repent ye, and believe the Gospel." It was of that aspect of the kingdom which is in the human heart and in human society of which he spoke. It is to be possessed immediately, here and now. Again Jesus said of it, "The kingdom of God is within you." This is the rule of God in the inner personality, from which springs forth continuously a stream of imaginations, impulses, purposes, emotions, desires, aspirations, decisions.

Repentance is sorrowful regret for such things as have sprung forth contrary to the holy will of God, and is the purpose also to cleanse that stream of all that is not pleasing in God's sight. Faith is the recognition of God's presence in the soul, forming a

spiritual union of the divine and the human, the natural fruits of which union are holy emotions, holy aspirations, holy imaginations, holy impulses, holy decisions. As God was in Jesus so God comes to man, and after the pattern in Jesus the man becomes a new creature. Former motives pass away; all things pertinent to spiritual life become new. This is the kingdom of God within us, an enlarged and changed life in which God rules. Like all accomplishments of God this life has a lawful beginning in the birth from above, and has a continuous development.

This union with God makes us obedient and accepted children. We are prepared by it to co-operate with God in establishing his holy will in social relations; that is, to hasten the day which Jesus came to declare, when all men shall live together as brothers, and children of one Father. This is to be the outward kingdom, in the social relations of men in the world, a manifestation of the unseen kingdom within the individual soul; the kingdom of God among men.

There seems no chance to doubt that Jesus had in mind a reconstruction of society on this earth, so that the justice and helpfulness of love shall rule. This is to come about through the regeneration of the minds of men by raying forth into them a greater measure of the mind of God. Through the regeneration of the individuals is to come the regeneration of the social order. Jesus taught that men should sanctify themselves, not alone or first for their own sakes, but with the conscious motive of helping to establish right relations among their fellow men. Jesus never tried to teach large numbers. He aimed to reach a few minds, and to impregnate them with the wisdom of the infinite mind which he possessed. Each mind thus enlightened should enlighten others.

The process of the kingdom was not simply that God should give his wisdom directly to individual men, but that every man who received the light of truth should let that light shine brightly for the enlightening of the minds of other men. Each man listening to the call, and coming into the kingdom, was to

have a large place in communicating the knowledge and love and holy choices of the kingdom to others. As Jesus sanctified himself for the sake of his disciples, so men were to sanctify themselves for the sake of the social order in the world. Even, in the providence of God, the coming of the kingdom is to wait the seemingly slow process of the divine enlightenment of the total mind in the human race.

It is a fact too patent to question that the social conditions of the early life of the individual largely determine the direction of the development and the measure of the development of the intellect, the emotions, and the will. Therefore the establishing of an ideal social order in which children are to be reared, is a legitimate and important measure for the hastening of the kingdom of God. The formative power of the social order upon the individual is so effective that it is not strange that many men think that upon the social order rather than upon the individual should be directed the efforts for the kingdom of God.

In distinction from individualists men so thinking may be defined as socialists. Clear thinking must lead us to the conclusion that the progress of individuals and of the social order are interdependent. To improve an individual means simply to qualify him to fill a more useful place in the social order and to improve its quality; to improve the social order at any point means the production thereby of a better quality of individuals. If, however, in this mutual progress one lawfully precedes, and the other follows closely, it is profitable to know that fact and to act on it.

Our whole scheme of theological thinking points to the improvement of the individual as first in order. All progress we have defined as the mind of man receiving more of the mind of God. In this process each mind receives individually. The knowledge of each is in some particulars its own peculiar possession. The infinite mind deals with finite minds individually. This is so true that in the whole multitude of human minds we cannot conceive that any two are exactly alike.

In God's ordained order we may conclude that it is the individual who must always take the first step in progress. Having taken this step he is in duty bound to help society up to his place, and then taking another step to help again. This is reasonably the historic order, even though the process is so complex that a beholder is easily deceived.

When a man meets with spiritual quickening, his vision is cleared so that he sees one perfect motive for action that should dominate all other motives, this is to co-operate with God in establishing his kingdom. Man fulfils the purpose of his being in having the rightness of the kingdom of God in his heart, and, in the spirit of the kingdom, fulfilling his social obligations to his fellows. He is to be Godly, or Godlike, and he is to manifest the purity and love of God in his intercourse with humanity.

Consequently to make the kingdom of God the motive of life does not abstract one from labour, from business, from recreations, from social relations of the family, from the societies

for fellowship and educational purposes, of which we may count the church one, nor from civic duties. In fact it is in all these relations with his fellows, and only in relation with his fellows, that a man has a chance to manifest the divine mind in him and to help others to attain this mind. The Christian religion is essentially social.

In the midst of all activities a man is to see clearly that there is one worthy object, the kingdom of God. Everything is temporal and fleeting except that kingdom, consisting of God, the man himself, his fellows, and their social relations. The work which men's hands laboriously construct, time obliterates: fortunes heaped together are soon scattered, or men die and leave them. The honour of men is empty, and usually senseless and variable. Family ties are loosened speedily by separations or death. Orders, clubs, and societies have their day. Nothing of governments will stay, except such qualities as are transmuted into the government of the eternal and holy will. The church mili-

tant will pass. We have no hope that more than two things will remain permanent of all the world holds, the divine mind in individuals and the divine relations, and these inseparably bound together are the spiritual kingdom of God. The kingdom may always need a body, but it may always be a changing body.

Wisely, then, the first question of every man's life is, How can I do most for the kingdom of God? And that question usually must resolve itself to this, How can I conduct myself in these daily activities so as best to promote the divine character in myself and in my fellows?

We may suggest how this works out in a few specific instances. Here is the family with marriage as its basis. No other human relation is as sacred as that of husband and wife. The family is the unit of society. In the family is the best place for developing, in individuals, and in human relations, the qualities of the kingdom of God. The principles of heaven,—truth, love, self-surrender,—find field there for exercise and development. If

men asked in their family relations day by day, how can these relations be best used to serve God's purposes, divorce would cease; family quarrels, the most demoralising of all quarrels, would be at an end; and the most potent means of bringing the young into the active exercise of divine capacities, of opening their minds to the influence of the mind of God, of putting them into the way of the useful and happy life, would be in employ.

If the kingdom of God stood first in men's minds, the attitude toward industries and commerce and possessions would be markedly changed. A man would still strive for gain but he would strive lawfully, that is he would strive for gain by means which enlarge the holdings of others, as all honest industry does; and I feel sure that with the kingdom in view, men would feel under as much obligation as now to put forth the best powers in them for the increase of the wealth of the world. Corn would not grow without planting and hoeing even if the kingdom were come.

But the wealth accumulated would be con-

sidered not as one's permanent personal possession, to be used arbitrarily for one's ease or pleasure, but as so much of resources entrusted to the individual by God, for God's purposes. The man having possessions would be under obligation to exercise care not to fritter them away in unwise charity of no benefit to those who received. He would have to use the best wisdom he could summon to employ what God had entrusted to him so as most largely to advance the kingdom. The possession of wealth would increase responsibility; and would in no case warrant ease, or idleness, or careless or wasteful expenditure. The employer with the transformed mind would do everything in his power for the well-being of his workmen. The workmen with the transformed mind would do everything in their power for the interests of their employer. Labour, capital, and management would endeavour to share equitably. Thus working in harmony much more would be produced by mutual efforts than is now produced, and with the waste stopped, all would have abundance

of this world's goods for healthful and happy living.

There are always close relations between economic conditions and social conditions; though the relations are complex, and reducible to laws only with many exceptions. Disobedience to God tends to poverty, for evil courses are wasteful and opposed to habits of industry; but on the other hand often it is by disobedience to God's law of justice that the door is opened for the accumulation of wealth by the individual. Extreme poverty shuts men off from intellectual opportunities, tends to embitter men's feelings, especially toward the prosperous, increases the temptations to dishonesty, condemns men to home conditions inimical to modesty and morality, and impels them to forget their misery in drunkenness. Excessive wealth conduces to idleness, stupidity, luxury, indulgence in animal propensities, to pride, self-sufficiency, and hardness of heart.

While there are divine characters wrought in beauty on the anvil of poverty; and in the

midst of wealth noble men and women reflect the light of God's mind as precious stones reflect the sun; yet it would be the best for all concerned, both poor and rich, other things being adapted to the condition, to have the wealth of the world evenly distributed. In that case all would have enough to provide opportunity for good, none would have enough to be a weighty influence to evil. The one fact which annuls the wisdom of such equal distribution by arbitrary means, is that humanity has not as yet risen to the moral level where such equal distribution could be maintained. If property were thus distributed and left to private disposal it would soon be as unevenly distributed as before, and probably the bulk of it would be in the hands of less scrupulous and less capable men than those who now possess it.

Recognising this general incapacity, advocates of the arbitrary equalising of wealth propose to put all wealth into the control of a social government. To all intelligent men of benevolent intent such a proposition is

ideally desirable. The crucial question is of its practicability. Is there a sufficient fund of intelligence and good will as yet developed in the world or in any considerable section of the world to maintain effective social government? The majority of men think not. The quality of governments to-day indicates that there is not. Private possession is the reward of industry and enterprise, as well as of cunning and of force. Wealth is a ceaseless volume of commodities constantly being produced and as constantly being consumed, and it is dependent upon ceaseless industry and enterprise.

To make the nationalising of wealth desirable the majority of men must have reached that stage of development where they will work and plan as energetically from the motive of love, for the general good, as they do now for the hope of private reward. It is certainly not unthinkable that men should reach such a stage of moral development. The majority of mothers have approached it. Such development of service as a motive to

labour, is in direct accord with the spirit of the kingdom of God. The socialising of wealth may in years to come be a decisive step in the progress to perfect social order, the earthly kingdom of God. It is reasonable to believe that as the social order improves, by the normal working of economic laws, wealth will distribute itself ever more evenly, until essential equality will be gained without arbitrary action.

But the normal working of economic law is a process by which benevolent thinking embodies itself in practice. Economic justice will be attained when benevolent thinking establishes just action in the social order. It is the duty of each, awaiting the time of perfect social justice, to order his own action in the spirit of the kingdom under present imperfect conditions. If one may not find rules for his guidance to this end he may at least find principles. Wealth is a return for toil. It is never produced without toil. Wealth represents the wearing out if not the grinding up of human beings. It has been defined as

"coined sweat and blood." It is a sacred thing, and the benevolent mind must put it to sacred uses. But when the sacred nature of wealth is recognised, what is a man's obligation to his fellows? If he is a sharer in the profits of other's labour, what part of this profit is he justified in spending on himself? Two principles may be enunciated for his guidance: the first is that he may reasonably spend that which would be his share were the wealth of the world evenly divided; the second is that a man has a right to spend that which will enable him to serve his fellows most effectively.

On general principles a man has a right to consume as much as his neighbours. For the economic good of the whole it is desirable that each man shall consume that which fits him for most effective service. Extravagance in any form is a sin against society. Expense for display is wrong, though expense for beauty is not. Beauty adds to life. Expense for pleasure is wrong in any other form than that which qualifies a man to serve his fellows

better. True recreation is an economic investment, increasing the quantity and quality of work. The sin of extravagance is punished in the economy of God as all sin is punished. The weariness of satiety, the restlessness of uselessness and of continued sensual excitement, the embitterments of pride and envy, are the scorching of the fires of Gehenna. Men who live by wages are in less danger of extravagant expenditure, than those who live by profits, yet extravagance is a common sin of the poor. All men who live by wages are poor. It is inevitable in present economic conditions that it should be an endless problem for any high-minded wage earner suitably to feed and to clothe and to educate a family. All men are tempted to extravagance, but the temptation is especially strong to those who live by the profits of other men's labour.

It is apparent that wealth is in measure distributed by accident. Merit and ability enter into the distribution only comparatively. So if by chance one has a grasp on profits—a lien

by which he receives more than his due share of the products of toiling men and women—it is a question how he shall serve with his surplus the law of the kingdom,—that is, how he shall dispose of his surplus in a way both to save his own conscience and to benefit his fellow men. Shall he give away the surplus in charity? Some charity is wise, but the great mass of toilers who produce the profits and do not share in them, do not want charity, but justice; and they certainly do not need charity, but do need justice. The first place for surplus profits is in investment as capital. Every dollar employed in productive industry is a benefit to the toilers. It increases the total of wages paid, enlarges the demand for labour, and tends to enlarge the income of each individual toiler. Voluntarily also employers should pay the largest wages consistent with the stability of the business. By every means possible, also, toilers should be induced and enabled to be sharers in the capital which employs them. The general division of capital into small shares of

stock in the present day facilitates such distribution.

In order that they may thus become sharers in the capital which employs them, toilers should deny themselves and save from their small portion, and by investment should join as largely as possible in the sharing of profits. Toilers should also strive by all lawful means and in a sweet spirit for reasonable increase of wages and just conditions of employment. They should also qualify themselves for the best of service: because that is a duty which each man owes his fellows, because that is a means of rising from servile conditions, and because the spiritual quality of each man in his relation to the eternal and boundless nature of the kingdom is of far more lasting importance than all material wealth. It seems the God-ordered way that toilers shall work out their own salvation, and that such salvation shall be an accomplished matter in world conditions; and yet that the greater value of the process lies not in the equalising of wealth, but in the spiritual

qualities of patience, wisdom, endurance, self-control, and benevolence. So with God's help toilers are to fight, not selfishly but for their neighbours and the generations to come, and not bitterly, but with a sense of pity for their oppressors, the spendthrifts and the idle, knowing well that it is far worse to sin than to be sinned against, far worse to be unjust than to be dealt with injustly.

Can those who control surplus wealth dispose of it in other ways than by investment to advance the kingdom? A peep behind the scenes certainly raises the question of the justice of great endowments. Supposing a captain-pirate gives an enormous sum as an endowment for education. He does not give money. He gives a paper claim on the labour of an army of men in perpetuity. No income is derived from his gift from year to year to benefit the endowed institutions except as during each year this army of toilers contributes of the product of its toil. What right has a so-called philanthropist to give away thus the products of the toil of an army of

men in perpetuity? How did their toil become his property to dispose of? Supposing in some succeeding generation men should question this right, and should say: "We did not agree to this, and neither did our fathers; we were born with this mortgage upon us, and our fathers left it to us simply because they were enslaved by an economic custom which lacked justice; and is there reason why we should continue the burden, and pass it on to our children and our children's children?" It may easily happen that those who bear the burden of the endowment may not be permitted to share in the benefits, but that these accrue to people who already in other ways obtain more than their share of the products of toil. If the toilers should rebel, goaded by a sense of injustice, and refuse to bear the burden longer, who would have the right to say that they must bear it, or that they ought? So even endowments may prove an entailed curse.

And any discussion of endowments brings us dangerously near the question of the validity of the claim to private property. I think

we shall have to conclude that in the sight of God, such claim is slight, so slight that God does not permit individual men to exercise it long. God would seem to give men private property as a sacred trust for their fellows, leaving it in their hands only a few decades at the longest, and calling quickly for strict account.

A man with a large income may reasonably contribute liberally to those organisations for social betterment which are within the range of his knowledge. Any system of pensions or of insurance which tends to lessen individual responsibility for effective service and wise economy, will prove a hindrance rather than a help to the attainment of substantial equality in economic conditions, for such substantial equality must depend upon character and ability. Only such systems of rewards should be encouraged as tend to faithfulness, effectiveness, self-reliance, and forethought. The motive of rich and of poor in economic relations should be the brotherly love of the perfected kingdom.

In preparation for perfect social order, all government should be directed to give equality of opportunity for intellectual, moral, and economic advancement. Government is largely by statute law, and such law is only effective when it has public opinion behind it; and public opinion is another term for brotherly love or the benevolent mind. It is impossible to produce brotherly love by legal enactment. The law can only record effectively such measure of brotherly love as has been produced by the inworking of the mind of God in the minds of men. Just so far and so fast as brotherly love establishes public opinion for effective support, law should aim to prevent oppression of the young and the weak, to prevent extortion by monopoly, to distribute the burdens of taxation fairly, to make trade as free as is consistent with a necessary revenue, and to conserve and to develop for the public good the public resources. The checking of the most apparent blight upon civilisation, the illegitimate use of intoxicating liquors, would seem likely to be best accomplished by making

the manufacture and sale of such liquors a government monopoly. Every public officer should consider himself a sub-lieutenant of God, engaged in the affairs of his kingdom.

Would men laugh and would men play under present imperfect conditions if they had the serious matter of the kingdom of God first in their minds? I think they would; and more men would laugh and play; and the many children who now have no childhood would laugh and play. Not to check joy but to give joy, is the spirit of the kingdom. In whatsoever measure it comes it adds to the joy of the world.

If the majority of men were to seek the kingdom, war would cease with its burdens and its woes. There would be decreasing need for police and courts and prisons. In civil government selfish ends now appear and there is a large element of public robbery. Government in the spirit of the kingdom would be simply for enlarged economic and educational purposes.

As fast as men seek first the kingdom, the

spirit of clubs and secret societies will be exalted, and their usefulness will be increased. Men also will take a different view of the church. The church is the one institution having for its purpose the opening of men's minds to the inflowing of the mind of God. The church is founded on two undenied facts; first that the subtle influence of mind on mind in united seeking after the mind of God in an especial way subdues and quickens the mind to the reception of divine knowledge: and second, that the mutual impartation of that wisdom which each receives, increases the wisdom of all. The church is the body of men who meet for united worship of God, and for the mutual impartation of divine wisdom.

Both processes are a conscious effort, mutually entered into to know the mind of God. The church exists for worship, or waiting on God, and for teaching, or witnessing to the wisdom received from God. Since God is able to impart wisdom only to those who desire it and will use it, the church strives for holiness of life and for works of love. Because the

church has the unique purpose to aid men to that mind of God which is the prime need of human life, it demands the first place in the loyalty of all. From it goes forth the wisdom of God to render family life blessed, to establish and ever inspire institutions for all kinds of learning, to permeate literature and the stage with ideals heroic and useful, to refine art, to put justice into commerce, and to put love into all social bodies, like secret societies and labour organisations. The mind of God for which the church stands is essential to the usefulness of all these supplementary institutions.

The church has its faults, and of necessity must have until the will of God is done in it as it is in heaven, and its membership has ceased seeking the goal of divine life because it has reached it. But the church of Christ is the earthly vessel which holds the idea of the perfect life of heaven. We can make allowance for the exceptional case, and then say: Just so far as men come to a realising sense that the kingdom of God is the matter

of first importance in life, they will ally themselves with the organisation committed to the leadership of Christ, who is the clearest exponent of the kingdom, deeming it a privilege to be of those who in human frailty have joined in mutual fellowship to strive for the highest good,—to know the mind of God and to enter into his life.

With all its weaknesses and deliberate crimes the church of Christ in all its history has been the best of the institutions of earth, and we believe ever grows better; and the man who puts the kingdom first will feel the call to the church, that by the measure of his transformed personality he may aid it to be the instrument of God for giving the world a knowledge of himself,—

"The blessed means to holiest ends."

Men ally themselves with the church to become a part of its universal weakness, confidently awaiting the day when its principles shall disclose to the world their unconquerable strength.

It is life divine to have the mind opened by the will toward the mind of God, and in the personal intimacy of faith to partake of the wisdom, the love, and the holiness of God; but this experience is impossible, or abortive of its highest ends, unless it results in the quickening of all one's powers for co-operation with God in the establishing of his rule on earth. The kingdom of God on earth is the immediate practical problem of humanity; and sane, well-ordered spiritual development comes only to him who joins heartily with his fellows in labouring to establish this kingdom.

This work brings every faculty of the divine man into fullest and happiest play. The highest good in world conditions is strenuous benevolent activity, inspired by the firmest faith in God and the fullest love for men. However strikingly and helpfully ethical instructors may define the principle of right action as goodness, utility, loyalty, or beauty, the term which is shortest and most comprehensive is that used by Jesus, the word "love." Love is the basis of right relations between

persons, human and divine; the one word "love," is the sole constitution of the kingdom of God.

No man need waste his pity on the minister of the Gospel working for a pittance, or on the missionary toiling in the midst of filth, and ignorance, and vice. For the man who has honestly given himself to God to serve his fellow men, has meat to eat that the world knows not of. He gets disentangled from the lust of the flesh, the pleasure of the eyes, and the pride of life. The light of transfiguration lights his countenance, and his inner spirit, like a Spring morning, is filled with the power of endless life.

In a previous chapter we have stated the grounds for believing in a continuing life. God is the author of our intelligent processes. He would not have given us a sense of the future or a sense of the perfect simply to tantalise us. It is impossible for us to doubt that God has an adequate purpose in the creation and on-leading of the race. No such adequate purpose is disclosed in the experi-

ences of this life. It is inconceivable to think that God should have made us a sharer of his own life in intelligence and love and choice, with the intent to cast us off. Therefore the whole logic of our reasoning is that we are to continue to live.

It is also a reasonable supposition that the continuing life will be in an unseen part of the universal kingdom of God, the part into which men enter after passing from the body, and that the life there will match right on to the life of this world; that we shall find there a place for the exercise of the faculties which the experiences of this life have developed. Disobedience and shame and pain may be done away; but as quality and joy come here by effort only, it is reasonable to expect that they will come there in the same way. There may be tasks and burdens, the opportunity for initiative and enterprise. From experiences here we should not expect to be shut up to eternal idleness in the name of rest; nor to music to the exclusion of wit; nor to golden streets to the exclusion of shaded and mossy paths.

One thing that surely we may expect is joyous fellowship with the acquaintances of this life, and with the numberless new acquaintances to be made in the ages of eternity, perhaps with men reaching back to the traditional times of Jacob and Abraham; and in this interplay of mind on mind our own minds may joyously progress toward the fulness of the mind of God in knowledge and in love.

# VIII

## THE ESSENTIAL THINGS

IN the closing chapter it may be well to state again the contention of this book: that revelation is the mind of God manifesting itself directly to the minds of individual men; that all revelation is lawful and reasonable; and that to the contents of men's minds we are to look for sanctions for religious faith. The mind includes the faculties by which we know things, both intuitively and understandingly, and the reason, the affections, the imagination, and the will. To the processes of the mind we must look, and to these alone, for religious assurances. And in the processes of the mind we think we have warrant, or sanction, for religion, which is competent.

This assurance lies in the fact that men's minds work lawfully, and work alike in es-

sential matters. If the human mind is an emanation from the mind of God we should expect it to share in God's attribute of freedom. It certainly does. There seem to be few restrictions to what a mind may think. Starting from any kind of suggestion, the mind can wander where it pleases, with some sense of orderly going, and reach some conclusion. The vagaries of thinking on religious subjects are not to be numbered. What have men not thought? Yet the mind is a lawful thing, and there is law underlying all its processes. This is so true that it is manifest even in the thinking of the insane. The alienists trace lawful stages by which the mind usually breaks down in disease; and it is equally true that men think alike fundamentally when they think sanely. So far as religious thinking is concerned, men think alike in all essential matters, and their variations in thinking are only in matters non-essential. This thinking alike in essential matters furnishes reasonable warrant for religious life in the individual, and the only legitimate sanc-

tion for instruction in religious thought for the perpetuation of religion. In form this assurance which shapes itself into a reasonable authority is like the sanction for the correct use of language; but in content it is far more. Authority for the use of words lies in the general agreement of the best minds. Though the agreement is not absolute the consensus provides adequate sanction. In religious thinking there is agreement in essential things by those qualified to judge; but, more than this, the agreement in primary and essential matters of religion is based upon certain mental operations common to all men. Men think, and they agree that they all have intelligence; men are emotional and affectionate, all men; men are free to act, so that all are held responsible. These three attributes, thinking, feeling, willing, common to all minds, combine in the moral experiences which are also common to all.

The next step, not so self-evident, is reasonable, that these qualities of mind are received from God, that mind in man is a spiritual organ

corresponding to mind in God and capable of the progressive understanding on man's part of the mind of God. This is adequate reason for believing in God and for reverencing him. Affection in ourselves leads us to believe that God is affectionate and lovable, and this is reason for love toward God. In these same attributes of mind, knowing, feeling, and willing, which are common to all men, we have reason also for love toward men; for the common moral consciousness finds its satisfaction in social relations only in the benevolent mind. No sane man questions that love is the fulfilling of the law. Even when we expand the sense of law to its largest limits, considering it the law of obligation or the law of opportunity, it is yet fulfilled by the benevolent mind. These two things, love to God and love to men expand into the total of religious life. They are the essence of Christianity.

It is apparent that though this sanction for religion is inward and spiritual, beginning with the individual, by the consensus of agreement, it becomes an outward sanction, capable of

being lodged in an institution. Indeed we shall see that for its preservation and power it must be lodged in an institution; and must in a sense be an external sanction for religion; though it can never be coercive of any man's mind, and can never resort to anything except its reasonableness to secure acquiescence; that is, in every individual, always, it must be subject to private judgment. The statement may be made without qualification of any sort that it is inconsistent with the theory of revelation fundamental to this discussion, that any authority can exist with right to coerce in any manner any man's mind in any matter. God deals with men's minds directly; each man is answerable for his thinking directly to God, and God's dealing with men as free agents indicates that he considers the thinking faculties so sacred that he himself will not interfere by force. Jesus dealt with men solely by reasonable appeals or conclusive judgments based on the supposition of individual integrity of mind.

Yet in the exigencies of the situation, even

though revelation and responsibility are so thoroughly individual, there is need of institutional religion. As we have stated, all bulwarks of morality and religion have to be built up anew in each generation. Each generation has to be taught to use words, which are the vehicles of thinking, or there would be little thinking; and likewise each generation must of necessity be instructed in faith and righteousness or there would be immediate reversion to primitive religious conditions. In order that the body of knowledge necessary to maintain faith and righteousness may be passed from generation to generation there must be as a custodian, some sort of a religious institution. When we have decided upon the nature of the religious content to be preserved and taught, we can see the form of institution fitted to the work. Then what is essential to religion? What is the religious instruction men need?

Reverence for God and for all his works is the first essential of religious instruction, and out of this comes obedience to God; love for

God and for all his works is the second essential, and out of this comes helpfulness to one's fellows. Such reverence and love are essential to religion; and nothing else is essential. Involved in these is the nobler idea of the being of God, and the particulars of righteous conduct. In a preceding chapter we have spoken of the ideas of God as cumulative; but they are not so much an accumulation as they are a result of elimination. In fact the idea of God in its advanced and noblest form is simpler than the idea of gods in primitive minds. A child grasps the idea of God more easily than it masters the alphabet. The contents of a rounded righteous life is more complex but it is a practice of love, to be gained by experience in social relations, and not a system of truth which can be taught by an institution.

The essentials of religious instruction are then so simple that an institution for preserving them and for teaching them should be simplicity itself. Why not trust this instruction to the home and the state as is trusted

the instruction in the use of words? For the same reason that universities are added to the primary schools, but with even greater significance; because the instruction in the elements is not enough. As in letters, so in religion, there is chance for endless progress, and no stopping place short of the perfection of God. And, moreover, for religious purposes intellectual instruction is not sufficient, there is need of the constant fostering of all the attributes of the mind, the imagination, the affections, the will. The religious instinct may be natural but it is not spontaneous, and needs constant encouragement; and it seems God's ordained way that it should get this encouragement sympathetically, in a community of souls, rather than individually; for while revelation is to the individual, the expression of faith and the exercise of love can take place only in a social order.

To call all the spiritual faculties of man into fullest action is then the work of the religious institution. And what will be its form? As has been said the church has no

right to external authority; and its sole task is to foster reverence and love. It can foster these only by reasoning, by stirring the imagination, by applying human affection in encouragement; and by bringing the divine affection into operation through worship. A work so simple, and yet so great! What form of church is adequate? What sort of church would that be which should eliminate from its care everything except the essentials to the Christ life, instruction in worship, and should elaborate these to satisfy the whole spiritual nature of man? To be adequate it must open the way for the broadest and highest reaches of men's minds in speculative thinking, it must minister to the strongest and most delicate play of the emotions, and set free the imagination, by the power in nature, and by the power in art,—in music, in poetry, in architecture, in sculpture, and in painting; the object of its efforts must be to lift its votaries into peaceful and joyous fellowship with God, and to inspire sensitive and passionate love for humanity. Easily, if it accomplish these

things, it will rank first among the institutions of men; because it will be doing for men that which is valuable to them above all else, promoting the endless enlargement of life.

The error of the Christian church in all its present forms is that it insists on things non-essential to reverence and to love, a multitude of things, which befog faith and hinder righteousness. Its directors neither enter freely into the kingdom, nor do they permit others to enter. The church would seem to be smitten with a similar error to that dominating the religious institutions which Jesus denounced and defied; and to be in sorest need of reformation by the Modernist principle of the direct and lawful revelation of the mind of God to the minds of men, and the resulting freedom of the individual. Such reformation would be radical. To introduce freedom of religious thinking into the Roman Catholic Church would undermine dogma, traditionalism, sacerdotalism, and of course the hierarchy. Little would be left of that great

institution of essential, non-essential, non-reasonable outgrowths, partly of selfish purposes and partly of sincere but misdirected religious impulse. Swept away would be the mass of things which so clutter up the way of life that scarcely can men find it. The Modernists in the Roman Catholic Church do not wish to separate themselves from the church; they are its friends, and wish to reform it from within, that it may conform to modern knowledge in its teaching, and grow in spiritual power. These men are most devout men, but they are most thorough-going freethinkers. The strange thing is that they should not perceive that their ideas are subversive of about all in the Church of Rome which it, as a Roman institution, holds dear; that they should not perceive that any reconciliation is in the very nature of the situation impossible between their devotion to historical criticism and scientific knowledge and the institutions of the church as the Church of Rome. No mind can at the same time be bound and free. The Roman Catholic Church

is founded on an assumed authority, and maintains itself even by the claim of infallibility, and holds itself together by demanding the unqualified submission of all its adherents. It is the Pope and his advisors who are clear-headed in this controversy, even if in the wrong; for certainly no house of assumptions could stand long if it allowed to enter into it freely the soldiers of the truth. Therefore the Roman Catholic Church, with all worldly wisdom, resists, and undertakes to drive out the Modernists, unless they retract, and to stamp out the Modernist movement of thought, as men stamp out at the start a pernicious fire.

If thus the spirit of Modernism would undermine the Roman Catholic Church, how would it affect the Protestant denominations? Its undermining would be only a degree less rude and destructive. Of course every claim of Apostolic successive holding over in Protestantism would tumble into the abyss which holds all past follies. Every last shred of claim to any external authority would be

broken. All rituals would need revision to rid them of dogma and tradition and to accommodate them to the purpose purely of instruction and worship. All creeds would be reduced to the simple terms of reverence and of love. And perhaps the one necessary thing to yield, which would be found most difficult both for the Protestant and for the Roman Catholic thinkers, would be the pride of conceit; as difficult for the liberal Protestant men at one end of the line as for the Roman Catholic men at the other, for certainly pride of mind is as foreign to the simplicity of Christ as is sacerdotalism. Indeed a vital truth lies in the simplicity of Jesus, that reverence and love are as near to the humble mind as to the savant or the hierarch; perhaps even, that reverence and love are easier to the simple minded,—that the kingdom of God is not made up either of an intellectual aristocracy nor of a sacerdotal aristocracy, but that many a humble peasant is in closer touch with God, and reveres him more and loves him better, and even knows more of his mind, than does

the most noted Protestant savant or the Pope of Rome.

Will the day come when the Christian world will be united in one catholic church? That would be the result of the working out to its legitimate conclusions of the Modernist principle of revelation. It would seem reasonable that such unity should come through conformity in essentials and diversity in the useful non-essentials; for with the multiplicity of temperaments among individuals and nations, it would seem impossible, and not desirable, that there should be uniformity in the ways of inculcating and fostering reverence and love. But, if human minds are fashioned after God's mind, with fulness of revelation all men will hold similar ideas of God; and there is also one principle of conduct which is right for all men alike, that in all relations all shall walk in love. Indeed, even now, there is a general agreement in all Christendom on the essential matters of Christianity. Reverence and love are the same in one church as in another; the real way of life in Christ is the

same to Roman Catholic and to Protestant, to Greek and to Jew, and to all men; and this is reasonably so because the minds of all men are enlightened by the mind of God. With this large measure of unity in spiritual matters in all Christian churches now, and the diversities and conflicts being centred mainly in those things which would be eliminated by the acceptance of the theory of revelation to the individual and freedom in thinking, Modernism would produce essential unity,—a catholic church,—one in reverence and love, —even though manifesting diversity in polity and in forms of worship.

By the essential principles of religion, reverence and love toward God and men, we may test the probability that Jesus is the ultimate revelation. Certainly these qualities were never outlined as comprising the whole duty of man so clearly before Jesus put them into form; and certainly also not since the time of Jesus has any improvement been made in their simplicity and distinctness. From the nature of the case also we need no more revelation

for the purposes of human experience; for we can conceive of no man in world conditions so rising to fulness of reverence and of love that he should outgrow or overtop the revelation in Jesus. No man is likely to so master the lesson set in the life and teaching of Jesus that he will be in need of having a further lesson set; the man who calls for more light may be counted as wilfully blind. A pertinent part of the direct revelation of God to men is the taking of the things of Jesus, manifested in terms of human experience, and revealing their truth and worth. We may believe that there is a consistent and adequate scheme of spiritual life in the person of Jesus, not a simple germ to be developed to adequacy by the addition of tradition or dogma, but an enduring principle of wisdom, complete in itself for all human need, adequate for the total range of human experiences, a principle which loses as well as gains even by the Jewish interpretation by St. Paul or the Greek reconciliation by the writer of the Gospel of John. Jesus seems an adequate revelation,

and therefore ultimate so far as humanity is concerned and the searchers for religious truth so far as ethics are concerned, may safely go back to Jesus to find their God to revere and their way of life in love.

The world is old, and its follies long-lived. The changes in thinking among masses of men are very slow. Will a reasonable view of revelation, which is the pathway to essential unity in the church, and a power to convert the world, be accepted? This is a matter for faith and for ardent hope; but any one who expects that the Modernist movement either in the Roman Catholic Church or in the Protestant churches is to transform existing religious institutions immediately is doomed to disappointment. History shows that world thought-movements are painfully slow. Yet a long time ago in the dawn of recorded religious history a man of inspiration said that the word of revelation had gone forth, and that it should accomplish that whereto it had been sent. The same Word, or intelligent purpose, or mind, was in the fulness of time

manifested in the flesh. Jesus said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." Every man who truly hears the Word, or revelation, even if indistinctly, believes that it has come to stay. God is not in a hurry; it is simply a slow process to our hurried minds by which he reveals his mind to the minds of men, but the work never ceases. As the stream of human thought flows on from generation to generation it seems reasonable that it is constantly eliminating error, and that finally all error must give place to truth; that as running water purifies itself, so constantly influenced by the mind of God, the stream of human thought will do the same, until it becomes as clear in time as the stream in the apocalyptic vision, clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God.

Oh, what audacity! that one should throw a little book into this stream of thought, daring to hope that his contribution may be as a tiny rivulet trickling down over the gravel, moderately pure and transparent by the revelation of God, to do its part in the work

of general purification, though quickly to be lost to sight in the turbid waters. Yet one must think and throw out his thought as clearly as he may, because from certain experiences of his own mind he believes, and believes in something far better than his weak thinking, that if any stray and thirsty traveller will follow up the rivulet to its source, and will scoop away the gravel there, he will find a spring of water welling up everlastingly, from which he may drink, and drinking, live!

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